

Oral Questions

Will the Government, despite the signing of the Free Trade Agreement, be able to introduce a policy that will create jobs in Montreal East and protect jobs in the railway transportation industry? Yes or no?

Hon. Robert de Cotret (Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Mr. Speaker, finding out what this question is all about is quite a challenge!

First of all, the Hon. Member is talking about unemployment instead of employment rates. He does not mention the fact that the number of people in the labour force has increased considerably in the area. He does not mention job creation. And all this is being mixed up with free trade. He overlooked action taken by the present Conservative Government to enhance the economic well-being of the area. The report is being studied, thank you. And we will be able to make some pertinent announcements as soon as the studies have been completed.

If we look at regional economic development generally, because we have to consider all regions, we see that the Government has done very well, while Opposition Members keep trying to impede our progress on all kinds of initiatives that could create jobs, such as Bill C-22, with its prospects for advanced technology, 700 jobs, 1,300 jobs and \$700 million worth of investment. That isn't good enough!

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• (1500)

[*English*]

TRADE

ENERGY—CANADA-UNITED STATES TRADE AGREEMENT— STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO P.E.I. PREMIER

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister arising out of what he said earlier in the House. In my earlier question I asked the Government to confirm what Premier Ghiz of P.E.I. had said about the energy discussions and I want the Deputy Prime Minister to listen to the question and reply to it.

Premier Ghiz has said that the Premiers were never told energy was on the table and that it was not discussed at any of the meetings of the First Ministers. Since I confirmed with Premier Pawley's office in Manitoba that what Premier Ghiz stated is absolutely true, does the Deputy Prime Minister stand by what he said earlier in Question Period?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, I am advised that Premiers were briefed not only once but twice in September and in July, and on other

occasions officials were briefed about the energy package as well. Perhaps the Hon. Leader of the NDP might want to put in another call to his friends.

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, if the people of Canada, not to mention the Opposition, had to choose between the reliability of Premier Ghiz and Premier Pawley and that of the Government, I do not need need to tell him whose side they would come down on.

INFORMATION PROVIDED TO DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Since the Minister has said he was advised, by whom was he advised? Was it one of the other Ministers involved in the discussions? Was he advised by the Prime Minister's office? This is a fundamentally important question. Two Premiers have said one thing and the Deputy Prime Minister is saying another. The people of Canada have a right to get to the truth of this important matter.

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, it is a very fundamental question. I can advise the Hon. Member that I am giving him the information that has been given to me by a very senior official within the Government of Canada. I know that sometimes the Hon. Leader of the NDP does not like the answers, but just because he does not like them, he does not have to charge them with being dishonest. That is the information.

There is an axiom in this House that when a Minister for the Crown responds to a question, it is assumed that it is the truth, and on the basis of the information—

An Hon. Member: That's the problem.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, we went through this a little bit on Friday and I want to make it very clear that I am not misleading or distorting—

Ms. Copps: Just like C-22.

Mr. Mazankowski: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East would do well to sit back and listen from time to time because she will never allow the courtesy of a Member to put a question or answer a question without talking from her seat.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: The Leader of the New Democratic Party has every right to clarify this and I am trying to clarify it and that is the answer.

Mr. Speaker: I would advise the House that that concludes Question Period.