

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members will know that members of the public who are watching this will not know what has been going on. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, it was a late night.

The Prime Minister refused to reveal the contents of a letter from the President of the United States in which the President expressed his refusal to agree to a compulsory trade dispute mechanism. Has the Prime Minister now replied to the President making it clear to him that any trade proposal which does not contain a compulsory trade dispute mechanism and meaningful restriction on the unilateral right of the United States to countervail will not be fair, will not be free and will not be acceptable to Canadians?

If the President has not agreed will the Prime Minister instruct his Minister for International Trade and his chief negotiator to call off the negotiations immediately?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, Mr. Jimmy Coutts wrote recently in *The Toronto Star* that the Liberal Party has, among other things, no position on trade. That is being made very amply clear. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition seems determined to sabotage these talks one way or the other.

I tell the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition that in our judgment these talks are vital for the creation of jobs in Canada. A comprehensive trade agreement with the United States is a very important instrument of economic progress.

We have been negotiating with the United States at all levels, and I think we are making considerable progress. Whether we will be able to conclude an agreement, as I have always indicated, I do not know. This is a serious matter. There are very serious difficulties to overcome. My right hon. friend has indicated one of them.

From the beginning I have expressed the view that for a free trade document to contain an instrument that would allow the triggering of unilateral reprisals against one of the signatories is self-defeating. I have expressed that view repeatedly. It seems to me fundamentally inconsistent to seek, on the one hand, a liberalized document of trade, and on the other to allow that document to contain instruments that vitiate that very notion.

Indeed, I have responded to the President of the United States. I have very clearly conveyed to him the point of view of the Government of Canada, first, when he was here in Canada, then in Washington, and most recently in Venice.

As I have indicated to my right hon. friend time and time again, and I will do it one final time today, the Government of

Oral Questions

Canada has undertaken very difficult and, as Premier Bourassa has said, risky negotiations which are indispensable for the future of Canada. We are ready to take the risk to see if we can get a good deal for Canada. If we can, we will bring it forward for the consideration of the House. It will create the kinds of jobs that Canadians truly need.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

MINISTER'S VIEWS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Prime Minister questions arising out of his remarks. He has referred to the devoted public servants, the Minister for International Trade and the chief negotiator.

I would like to quote to the Prime Minister comments they have made recently. The Minister for International Trade said of the chief negotiator: "He is going nuts". The chief negotiator replied back that he thinks he might elope with the Minister for International Trade, which is probably full proof of the original assertion of the Minister.

The fact of the matter is we have two very clear differences between the Minister and the chief negotiator about the mandate for the trade agreement. Has the Prime Minister called these two chief officials together and asked them to get on the same track, to have the same mandate and the same approach toward negotiation?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I would like to refer to the quote that the Hon. Member has selectively read to the House. I can only add to that that in terms of the selective quotes to which he refers I was expressing my empathy for the Ambassador—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: He has gone nuts, that is right.

● (1430)

Miss Carney: I was pointing out that the Ambassador's job is different from that of the Cabinet, and that he is operating in conditions different from those which existed in the past, because this Government has the greatest consultative mechanism any Government has ever brought forward for any negotiations of this kind.

I pointed out that the Ambassador must not only deal with Cabinet, but with the provinces, with the business sector, and with our consultative mechanism. This advice goes into his office within 24 hours, and naturally, this puts a lot of pressure on him when he has to negotiate within a limited time.

I think it is useful for the House to know that these are the most different negotiations—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!