

Oral Questions

negotiations". Later that very same day the Minister for International Trade issued a statement clearly confirming that C-22 had been discussed and was "part of the natural process of these negotiations."

Why was the Minister saying to this House and the Canadian people that C-22 had not been part of the negotiations when that was clearly not the case? Will he not admit now that the Government has been misleading this House and the Canadian people, and trying to hide the fact of a clear link between C-22 and agreement by the U.S. on to free trade?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, as we have been saying since the election campaign of 1984, amendments to the Patent Act with respect to pharmaceuticals are absolutely necessary for research and development and health care in Canada, for our international obligations, and the protection of intellectual property. It is on that basis we have been proceeding. Bill C-22 was introduced, and hopefully will be passed by the other place, because it is needed for Canada.

The agreement between the U.S. and Canada, tabled in this House and signed by all parties, does not deal with C-22 because we introduced it because of its benefit to Canadians. We campaigned on it in the 1984 election. Indeed, the Government of which the Hon. Member was a part in June of 1983 said it was committed to changes in the Patent Act. All these things happened long before the trade talks were even initiated.

BILL C-22—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, the Minister has not explained why he said as recently as last Friday that Bill C-22 was not part of the trade negotiations when his colleague, the Minister for International Trade, said in her statement issued later that day that it clearly was. In fact, that was demonstrated to be the case by a document released to the press by the Canadian Embassy.

● (1420)

Why is the Minister trying to evade answering my very clear question as to why he, on behalf of the Government, continues to insist that Bill C-22 was not part of the free trade negotiations when it clearly was part of the negotiations? Why will he not come clean with the Canadian people and, rather than trying to hide that fact, try to explain the link? What is he afraid of? What is he hiding?

Hon. Harvie Andre (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I do not know to which press release the Hon. Member is referring. The one issued by the Minister for International Trade on Friday says that one of the working parties sent forward to negotiators a draft initialled by the working party chiefs recommending a commitment by the Government of Canada with respect to Bill C-22. The Ministers who were there, the Minister of Finance and the

Minister for International Trade, said no, and it was not included and is not included as part of the free trade package.

The contents of C-22 were put together by the Government quite separately, starting in September, 1984, and have to do with promoting research and development and better health care in Canada. The Bill reflects our obligations internationally in terms of intellectual property which are not and have never been a part of a free trade agreement. They have nothing to do with the free trade agreement.

DISCUSSION OF LEGISLATION BY WORKING GROUPS

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I will direct my supplementary question to the same Minister. If Bill C-22 was not part of the free trade negotiations, what were the two working parties doing discussing C-22? Were these working parties not there on behalf of their Governments? Is he trying to tell the House that the Canadian working party was there only to send out for fried chicken for the Ministers?

The fact is that the chickens have come home to roost and the Government has been shown to have been misleading the Canadian people. Why will he not admit that? If he did it would be a lot easier for himself and for this stumbling Government.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I would be allowed to answer that question since I was at the table when this event took place. There was some discussion in the working group on this. The members of the working group passed it up to the Ministers and we said, "Absolutely not, this is not a part of the trade agreement".

As the Minister for Consumer and Corporate Affairs has very effectively stated, it has never been a part of the—

Ms. Copps: Why did you sign it?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): The question coming from across the floor is "why did I sign it?" The simple fact is that I did not sign it, nor did the Minister for International Trade, the Chief of Staff of the Prime Minister nor the chief negotiator.

Mr. Lapierre: Who did?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): I should make it very clear that there were working groups—

Mr. Gray (Windsor West): Who were they working for?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): These working groups were made up of officials from both countries and were working on the components of the agreement. Anything that the working group members agreed upon had to be passed on to the table of Ministers where decisions were being taken. That particular proposal was not ratified by the Ministers since, as my colleague has just said, these discussions have never involved Bill C-22 in any way, shape, or form.