

HOUSE OF COMMONS

TRIBUTE TO PAGE STAFF

Mr. Speaker: I know that Hon. Members would want me to take a moment to thank our 42 parliamentary Pages.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1420)

Mr. Speaker: I can say to the Pages that I was going to read a bit of a statement, but I think that the House has expressed itself very well indeed.

I do want to say to all of the Pages that we are very impressed with your service this year, even though I understand that your skill at either hockey or softball is not that of the assembled Members of Parliament!

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Thank you very much for everything you have done. *Bonne Chance!*

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT—TERMS OF U.S. LEGISLATION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I recognize that the Minister for International Trade does not want to confuse himself with the facts by reading essential documents. I wonder if he has had an opportunity yet to read the final version of the U.S. Bill implementing the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, particularly those sections which I think that most Canadians will find outrageous and will find out that they have been substantially misled by the Government in all its guarantees and assurances.

There is now provision within that legislation to authorize the President to begin negotiating new measures dealing with investment in energy and culture, to eliminate all the clauses that have been grandfathered in the agreement, to begin to develop brand new regimes that would eliminate all the assurances that we have received.

Considering that that is now the U.S. agenda, does the Canadian Government agree to the negotiation of new measures in energy and culture? Is that part of the deal, that we have agreed to further give away and further sell out these crucial parts of the Canadian integrity?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the premises of the hon. gentleman's question are

Oral Questions

entirely incorrect. In the U.S. legislation, in the Statement of Administrative Action that accompanies it, it is said in several areas that the Congress would like the President to discuss with or negotiate with Canada certain other matters. Of course, it takes two people to negotiate.

We intend to be negotiating with the United States at the GATT negotiations. We intend to be negotiating with 96 other countries in the GATT round of negotiations. We are not going to negotiate or refuse to discuss with the United States matters that it might want to discuss, and we have matters that we want to discuss with it.

The hon. gentleman's statements about what is in the U.S. legislation otherwise are completely erroneous. If he is such a great reader and such an astute reader, would he refer to one specific item that I can then deal with, and not these wild, unfounded scurrilous, nonsensical pieces of nonsense that he gets on with?

He dealt with his own colleague, the Hon. Member for Montréal—Sainte-Marie this morning. No wonder he is irritable, because there now appear to be two trade critics in the Liberal Party.

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I would be glad to help the Hon. Minister with his remedial reading program, because I know that he needs all the help that he can get.

Section 304(B) states that the President is authorized to begin negotiations "to the extension of the principles of the Agreement to energy and cultural industries, to the extent such industries are not currently covered by the Agreement". That is written in black and white in the U.S. legislation, and the Minister may want to take the time to read it.

By saying in the House that it is now in agreement to conduct negotiations, why is the Government agreeing to a further elimination of protection for our cultural industries, further elimination of protection for our energy industries? Are we now agreed that we are now in a new bilateral negotiation giving away more that we gave away the last time?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the hon. gentleman better get somebody to give him a slide show. He does not understand what he reads.

This states that Congress would like the President to negotiate. Naturally they want the President to negotiate because the President did not get very much from Canada in the free trade agreement that is now before Parliament, so they want to continue negotiating, and we intend to continue negotiating. So does the Liberal Party, because the Hon. Member for Montréal—Sainte-Marie said today: "The Liberals will tell Canadians we won't negotiate one deal with the U.S. but several deals with other countries. We won't put all our eggs in one basket".