

Oral Questions

between the free trade agreement and commercial blood banks, the Minister of National Health and Welfare and Dr. Denise Leclerc-Chevalier are now examining the agreement and its implications for commercial blood banks? And why did the Department of National Health and Welfare get a phone call this morning from a representative of an American company who wanted to know whether, under the terms of free trade, they could come here to purchase blood from Canadians for a price, and not, as has always been the case, on a volunteer basis? Can they come here and buy Canadians' blood and export it to the United States under the terms of the free trade agreement? And why is the Red Cross afraid that blood banks will be included in the free trade agreement, if, according to what was said by the Minister for International Trade this morning, the FTA has no connection with blood? And why would U.S. companies already be trying to come here?

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, repetition does not make a statement correct. Here is the position. The agreement creates no new rights for the establishment of commercial blood banks in Canada. In Canada, as we all know, that function is carried out mainly on a volunteer basis by the Red Cross. The blood is distributed freely to Canadians. The FTA will have no impact on the operations of the Canadian Red Cross. It is a non-profit organization and is not affected in any way by the agreement.

Making this kind of allegation is a disservice to the people of Canada and is participating in a conspiracy to spread falsehoods about the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement.

REQUEST FOR GENERAL ELECTION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. He knows that the House now has before it legislation intended to implement the agreement reached between Canada and the U.S. on trade. He knows the Government did not receive a mandate in 1984 for such an agreement. He knows the opposition Parties would welcome an election on this issue and a large majority of Canadians have said they would like an election on this issue. Finally, he knows that he said on the weekend here in Ottawa that at some point the people of Canada would have an election.

Given all of the above would the Prime Minister explain to the House why the Government would prefer to force Parliament to debate this very important matter instead of going directly to the people of Canada and letting them have a say on this issue first?

● (1430)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, because we had the responsibility of providing the national Government. Included in that, of course—

Mr. de Jong: You don't have the mandate.

Mr. Mulroney: I'll try to answer, Mr. Speaker, if the NDP will let me. Included in this is the responsibility to create new wealth, new prosperity, and new jobs for Canadians.

In an era of growing protectionism following 1984 and pursuant to a very excellent report submitted by the Hon. Donald Macdonald, the former Liberal Minister of Finance, pursuant to recommendations of that Royal Commission, we initiated discussions which have now produced great benefits for Canada and, according to the Economic Council of Canada, will result in 250,000 new jobs.

My hon. friend will no doubt support the move to ratify this in the House of Commons and indeed, at an appropriate time, Canadians will be able to decide whether they agree with this prosperity or would like to change with the Hon. Member.

PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, as one says here, the Prime Minister did not answer the question. I want to ask him the question again in terms of the most basic democratic requirements about legislation which he himself has described as perhaps the most important bilateral arrangement between our two nations, if not in the history of the globe.

Since he himself and three of his senior Cabinet Ministers opposed this kind of deal in 1983, why will he not do the correct democratic thing and go to the people of Canada? If he gets his majority he will have a mandate. If he does not, we will not get involved in this complicated and undesirable arrangement with the United States.

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, it may be undesirable in the minds of the Leader of the NDP and the President of the CLC, but it is clearly very desirable in the minds of the Government of Canada and eight provincial Premiers representing political Parties from British Columbia to Newfoundland. It is clearly sustained by all objective data including the most recent report of the Economic Council of Canada which provides for a quarter of a million new jobs over and above those already to be created under the policies of the Government.

I know that my hon. friend clearly disagrees with free trade unless it is in automobiles, and with foreign investment, unless it is in Oshawa. However, we would like that prosperity for the rest of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is back in his usual high intellectual form of argumentation.

[Translation]

REQUEST FOR A GENERAL ELECTION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I simply want to ask the Prime Minister why, if he is so confident about