

Oral Questions

But for all of the concern that the hon. member is expressing about the level of the deficit, where is the Liberal Party in this debate? Where is the Liberal Party in putting forward any suggestions as to how we should be getting the deficit down?

All I hear from the Leader of the Opposition is "Why this fixation on the deficit? Why are they so concerned about the deficit?" The Leader of the Opposition has his head firmly buried in the sand and I think the hon. member has too.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Nunatsiaq, one question please.

Mr. Jack Iyerak Anawak (Nunatsiaq): Madam Speaker, a week ago in this House the Prime Minister asserted that the protection of minority language rights was not an abstract concept in Canada and that this protection was given meaning by the national will of a generous and tolerant people.

This week in a most ungenerous and intolerant action the government the Prime Minister leads announced it will close down eight aboriginal newspapers and financially cripple another seven aboriginal communications groups. Given these devastating cut-backs to aboriginal language programs in the International Year of Literacy and Communications, what kind of protection was the Prime Minister speaking of? Did he really mean protection from this government?

Hon. Gerry Weiner (Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)): Madam Speaker, the department certainly has had some expenditure cuts. That is clear. It is part of an over-all plan to provide us with a secure and prosperous future.

We have heard what the finance minister is proposing for all of us. It pains us to have to say to any individual or any group that somehow others may have to share in the obligation of being supportive. I have commended the efforts of those who have worked in the field. We have a very active race relations program. We have a good understanding as a government of what has to be done in this nation to help all attain a level of citizenship that gets that full participation. We are developing initiatives from coast to coast to address the very concerns that the member is raising.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, one question.

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TRADE

Mr. David Barrett (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca): Madam Speaker, my question is to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The minister mentioned earlier today that Canada must use the instruments that are available in negotiating issues around trade relative to the fish agreement.

The minister knows that after the GATT ruling against our decision to inspect fish at landing, the government decided to go to the free trade panel. At the free trade panel hearing the ruling was that the United States should have access to 10 per cent to 20 per cent. Instead of accepting the finding of the free trade panel, the Minister for International Trade said that the U.S. refused to accept the panel's ruling and drove a harder bargain of 20 per cent this year and 25 per cent in subsequent years.

It is not a question of anti-Americanism. Why did the minister cave in after the free trade panel that he asked for said only 20 per cent and he got bludgeoned into giving another 5 per cent and further down the road? Does the panel stand for anything or is the minister gutless right across the board?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I will not talk to the hon. member about gut. Let me deal with the important issue that he raised.

There was a panel finding and there was a response on the part of the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States. The question at issue was that while there was a reference to the percentages, there was also a consideration of Canada's ability to impose our conservation requirements.

An hon. member: Read the decision.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): I read the panel. The panel makes it very clear that we would not have the conservation protection under the panel report that we have under the arrangement negotiated by the Government of Canada. What we did was purchase greater protection for Canada to be able to apply our conservation regimes.