

Oral Questions

In the case of Big Cove the federal government has yet to take any action on a coroner's inquest recommendation calling on the federal government to develop community-based mental health programs.

Will the Prime Minister give the residents of Big Cove his assurance today that he will personally take this file under his consideration and that the tragic crisis facing this community and others will receive his government's immediate action?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, it is very sad what happened in Big Cove yesterday. I am sure the whole House will join with me when I offer our condolences to the tribe or the band itself.

Two proposals were submitted by the band in January that were not given to the federal level, my own level. They were turned down by officials at the maritimes office. I called the chief last night and said I would personally look after the proposals made.

This afternoon I can say I have instructed the official on the two proposals turned down last month and they were accepted this morning.

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TRADE

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

A Mexican government-supported development bank is openly supporting an operation to buy up U.S. companies and move them to Mexico in order to make big profits using cheap labour. Canada will be next.

Are members of the government going to sit on their collective butts while a Mexican government gang of carpetbaggers comes into this country to take jobs and move them down to Mexico, or will this government take action to protect Canadian jobs under NAFTA?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, possibly my friend should cool his rhetoric before he gets the facts.

The fact is that the Mexican government is not going to be involved in that bank.

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair): Well, Mr. Speaker, the fact is that the prospectus of the company involved indicates clearly that the Mexican bank will be involved in it.

About this there is no doubt: the Mexican Minister of Commerce has been in Montreal selling cheap Mexican labour. In the meantime the president of ACOA-supported Canadian Helicopters Ltd. says he is very much attracted by the cheap labour in Mexico, the lax labour standards and the lax environmental standards in the Mexican work place.

Does the government—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. McCurdy: I have all day, Mr. Speaker.

An hon. member: No you do not.

Mr. Speaker: That is sometimes a pious hope here. The hon. member will put his question, please.

• (1440)

Mr. McCurdy: My question for the Prime Minister is: Does this government not realize that NAFTA is going to launch a tremendous Mexican sting operation, which is already evidenced, to come up to Canada to sell cheap labour in Mexico even at the expense of some of the poorest parts of this country?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the next time my friend, the Secretary of Trade from Mexico, comes to Canada I am going to ask my friend to join us. The hon. member has just taken what was said totally out of context. What we did do yesterday was visit Canadair Challenger operations, SR Telecom and the AMF operation which re-manufactures rail cars and diesel engines.

In each case these companies are actively selling successfully into Mexico, generating jobs back here, generating work for people who are paid Canadian salaries and able to compete against what my hon. friend refers to as low salaries in Mexico.

The point of the matter is that my friend should get his facts straight and should put out a balanced position as to what the attitudes and policies of the Mexican government are. I think we were very successful yesterday in helping create jobs for Canadians in Mexico who will take advantage of the North American free trade agreement.