

Oral Questions

Why has the Government signed an agreement to take away from Canadian consumers protection against energy shortages?

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): This agreement does not take that protection away. We still have the National Energy Board that monitors the amount of energy we have here. It still grants the export licences for export of product from Canada. The control is there.

I might remind the Hon. Member that the Canadianization policies of the energy industry are grandfathered within this agreement. So what he is telling the Canadian people is not correct.

POSSIBLE EFFECT OF AGREEMENT ON PROVINCIAL RIGHTS

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, I am quoting from the Minister of Energy's own briefing notes. Those are not my notes, they are the Minister of Energy's notes.

As a result of the free trade agreement, not only will the rights of Canadian consumers be subject to American court challenges, but the rights of the provinces over their own energy reserves must be decided by the Supreme Court of Canada if they are to be honoured.

How could the Government of Canada sign a free trade agreement that would take away from provinces like Nova Scotia, Quebec, and Alberta, their own rights over their energy resources? How could the Government tie up energy investment in this country for years while those questions are being reviewed by the Supreme Court of Canada?

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend is wrong again. That is three times. Three strikes and you are out.

Let me remind the Hon. Member of what the Minister said on October 8, 1987. I quote from page 9820 of the *Commons Debates*:

I can only repeat that in our energy negotiations we secured access for all forms of energy which this Government has put in place. I can also assure him that any rights the provinces had before this agreement concerning their own policies, they will have after this agreement.

[*Translation*]

INQUIRY WHY BILINGUALISM AND CULTURE NOT PART OF EXEMPTIONS

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to any of the Members opposite who would care to field questions on the Mulroney deal.

Mr. Speaker, in committee yesterday, we had witnesses on behalf of the Coalition québécoise who mentioned a major point omitted by the Agreement from the Canadian Government. On page 15 in the section on standards, it is permitted to

adopt standards and regulations to protect health, safety, the environment and national security.

I want to ask the parliamentary secretary why bilingualism and culture are not included in this section.

[*English*]

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): I disagree again with the findings of the group that appeared before the committee yesterday.

The free trade agreement will have absolutely no impact on the current requirements for bilingual labelling and for the provision or use of manuals in French, none whatsoever. Bilingual labelling and French language consumer information will not be negatively affected by this provision at all.

[*Translation*]

QUERY WHETHER EXEMPTIONS WILL BE CLEAR IN FINAL TEXT

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, I shall address my question to the Deputy Prime Minister as it is very important for all Canadians. Is it true that, as the Parliamentary Secretary has said, this will have no effect on bilingualism and bilingual labelling? Can the Deputy Prime Minister assure me that the exemption will be clearly, precisely and specifically stated in the final text?

• (1425)

[*English*]

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I think when the final text comes out and the Hon. Member reads it—I hope he does read it because I am not sure he has read the agreement yet—he doesn't have to give me dirty hand signals—I can tell the Hon. Member that it will be very clear that they will not be affected in any way, shape or form.

Mr. Lapierre: Yes or no?

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AIR TRANSPORT

AIR TRANSPORTATION OF PLUTONIUM—UNITED STATES-JAPAN AGREEMENT

Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville): Mr. Speaker, it has been reported that the President of the United States has now signed an agreement between his country and Japan allowing for the transportation of plutonium over Canadian territory. I understand that the Canadian Government has asked to be consulted about this agreement.

My question is for the Minister of Transport. Have our friends, the Americans, responded to our request for consultation and have we seen the agreement? What is our response to it?