

Oral Questions

[Translation]

FREE TRADE

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT PUBLISH 98 PER CENT OF FINAL WRITTEN AGREEMENT BEFORE FIRST MINISTERS' MEETING

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister for International Trade.

Can the Minister comment on reports in today's papers that the final text of the free trade agreement between Canada and the United States will not be released until November 30?

What is the current situation? How much longer the wait? And can the Minister assure us that, if the full text is not drafted, 98 per cent of the text which is now complete will be made public before next week's First Ministers' conference?

[English]

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the chief negotiators have assured us that they are working as rapidly as possible on the final text and that it will be made available as soon as it can possibly be ready.

REQUEST FOR PUBLICATION PRIOR TO MEETING OF FIRST MINISTERS

Mr. Mike Cassidy (Ottawa Centre): Mr. Speaker, there is now a chance that we may not even see the text before it is submitted to Congress on January 3 at the rate the Minister is going.

According to press reports, we are talking about an eight-week delay between the October 4 signing and the possible November 30 publication of the text. Why can Canadians not know what is in the text of this accord? Why should Canadians be dragged into a free trade accord without knowing the details of it? Will the Minister assure us that the 95 per cent or 98 per cent which has apparently been signed is made public before the First Ministers meet to talk about the economy next week?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, we have just had a very disturbing example of the kind of misinformation which the opposition Parties are spreading about the free trade agreement. The suggestion being made by the Hon. Member is quite simply wrong. By advancing the suggestion repeatedly, as he is doing, he is again doing what the Opposition is always doing on this issue—giving Canadians misinformation. I have said that the text is being worked on now and will be ready as soon as possible.

● (1450)

TAX REFORM

FLOW-THROUGH SHARES

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. It looks like the Government has decided to sacrifice regional development on the twin altars of the U.S. trade agreement and the marketplace.

Some Hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Garneau: Which is further evidence—

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, could you ask people on the other side to refrain from holding private conversations? Look at the polls and then—

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I can call for order, but the Hon. Member is entering into a preamble which is very argumentative. That does sometimes create a reaction. I would ask the Hon. Member to put his question.

Mr. Garneau: If I can have the floor for a moment, I will repeat that the Government seems to have abandoned the regions. This is evidenced by another decision of the Government—to abandon earned depletion on flow-through shares.

Will the Government change its White Paper and reintroduce the earned depletion allowance on flow-through shares so that mining regions such as the Abitibi, northern Ontario, northern Manitoba, western Canada and even the Maritimes, will be assisted in exploration for new mines?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member knows very well that the Government has not abandoned its commitment to regional economic development. As a matter of fact a number of specific programs have been designed to overcome regional economic difficulties that are being experienced in some areas of the country.

If the Hon. Member is really interested in overcoming regional economic disparities, particularly in the Montreal region, he will join with his colleague, the Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie, in petitioning the Senate to move Bill C-22 along.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mazankowski: As far as the Hon. Member's reference to flow-through shares is concerned, the Minister of Finance has pointed out in the House on a number of occasions since the report of the standing committee was brought down that he will study the report very carefully and will respond to the recommendations when he tables a Ways and Means Motion.