

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

BONN ECONOMIC SUMMIT

CANADIAN CONTRIBUTION TO EXTERNAL AID

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I direct my question to the Prime Minister, but I would first like to welcome him back to Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Chrétien: If he had done as he had been well advised to do, stick with the agenda and deal with environmental questions and foreign aid, I think I would have been more than pleased to congratulate him on achieving something like that. But in the words of John Fraser, a *Globe and Mail* correspondent, today:

But the hype and silliness around the concept of the The Great Conciliator, which the Prime Minister unwisely fuels, undermines his real, albeit modest accomplishments.

I would like to tell the Prime Minister, Mr. Speaker, that his success at Bonn is a bit similar to the success of the Miller and Mulroney show in Toronto last week.

Seriously, I would like to say to the Prime Minister that we subscribe to his goal to urge the developed nations to put more money into foreign aid. In the light of what the Prime Minister discussed in Bonn, is it the intention of the Government to reinstate the money which was cut from foreign aid last fall in the economic statement of the Minister of Finance?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I thank my friend for his warm welcome. I am reluctant, of course, to take issue with anything written by such a distinguished journalist as Mr. Fraser of *The Globe and Mail*, but my hon. friend would forgive me in the circumstances, because of his question, for pointing out the entirely different versions which appeared in the front pages of the *New York Times*, and *le Figaro*, as well as a direct statement by the President of France, who said that the Prime Minister of Canada, and our delegation, played a very important role at that conference.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: All we did was follow in the distinguished role of previous Canadian leaders, including my hon. friend when he was Secretary of State for External Affairs. Canada has consistently played, I think, a helpful and useful role.

With regard to the direct question, we were, I think, helpful in securing the third window with which my hon. friend is acquainted, and which would be very helpful to developing countries. And we have no intention of doing anything other than continuing in that vein of being helpful, financially and otherwise, to developing countries around the world.

Oral Questions

[Translation]

EXTERNAL AID

NICARAGUA—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister would be well advised to speak to his Minister of Finance and re-establish the goals announced by the Canadian Government, namely, that we were going to spend 0.7 per cent of Canada's GNP on foreign aid. Could the Prime Minister inform the House whether communications with President Reagan have deteriorated to the point that the Prime Minister is no longer notified of decisions that shock Canadians, such as the embargo on trade with Nicaragua, especially since last year in the House, he said it was an insult that President Reagan had not given the Prime Minister advance notice of the invasion of Grenada? Does the Prime Minister not think he should take the same position on this latest decision, where the economic survival of the poor people of Nicaragua is at stake?

● (1420)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I agree with my hon. friend. We have done much more than that. The Hon. Member is referring to a matter of form, but I would prefer to discuss the substance of the issue, which is far more important to the Members of this House. The U.S. Government unilaterally announced its intention to impose an embargo on trade with Nicaragua. Canada has taken a position against such action, and announced that it is neither in the interests of Canada nor consistent with our traditions. I think all Members of this House would agree with this position, which has been taken internationally.

[English]

GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, if the Prime Minister is completely in accord with that position which was supported by the three Parties in this House and by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, why did the Prime Minister, in Bonn, take a stand which would humiliate the Secretary of State for External Affairs, saying that he did not agree with him that Canada should have been informed? Who is speaking for Canada when we are talking in this House and abroad about external affairs?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): I think I just dealt with what is the important question, the question of substance. The Government of Canada, notwithstanding an initiative announced in Bonn by the President concerning their intention to impose a trade embargo on Nicaragua, indicated we were in disagreement with that move, we would not subscribe to that view, and we would oppose it because it was not in the Canadian national interest. I would hope that all Members of this House would applaud that declaration of independence in foreign policy by the Government of Canada.