

Oral Questions

from salt on the roads. The costly corrosive effects of salt on our cars, farmlands, streets and buildings, as well as its harmful effects on our soil, fish and wildlife, are now legally recognized. Even the Minister of the Environment (Mr. McMillan) admits: "Salt is known to have certain adverse environmental effects".

The federal Government should now launch a national campaign to convert away from salt to methanol or calcium magnesium acetate, known as CMA. A recent scientific report by Dunn and Schenk notes that using either substance would cut our winter de-icing costs in half. Both CMA and methanol improve traction, act as corrosion inhibitors, with no adverse effects to soil or water. What is more, both can be made from natural waste cellulose.

I made an offer as late as this past August for the Minister to begin test trials of these two road de-icers in my own riding of Skeena. The road linking Smithers, Terrace, Kitimat and Prince Rupert offers a variety of winter highway conditions. Existing vehicles can be used to apply CMA. Wood waste is readily available and Kitimat is home to the ocelot methanol plant.

In light of yesterday's Supreme Court decision and the fact that winter is fast approaching, I would urge the Government to undertake immediately a Canadian test program for CMA and methanol. They are cheaper, more efficient and a more environmentally sound method of ensuring safety on our winter roads for all Canadians.

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COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

PROCEEDINGS IN STANDING COMMITTEE ON LABOUR,
EMPLOYMENT AND IMMIGRATION

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, it is sad to witness the continued government manipulation of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration. First it blocked the Georges Grossmann and John Quigley investigations, then it eliminated the former chairman. Yesterday the Government turned again to its bullpen of parachute replacements who descended upon the committee and poisoned the atmosphere by demanding the immediate firing of the research director.

No legitimate reasons or evidence were offered. Instead, their reasons were rooted in innuendo, unsubstantiated allegations and blatant partisan motivations. Government members also moved a motion to bar any Member from utilizing our researchers until a thorough evaluation of our research needs is completed. It is a motion which, in my opinion, is irresponsible, undemocratic and an affront to our rights and privileges as Members of Parliament.

This is a committee that offered leadership and vision. Now, thanks to the Government, it has become a sad and depressing

sight, showing what happens when a Government moves in to kill free speech and independence of thought in our committees. Our system and all Canadians are the losers because of it.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES TRADE AGREEMENT—VIEW OF
UNITED STATES PRESIDENT

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. Yesterday, in Somerset, New Jersey, the President of the United States, referring to the trade agreement between Canada and the United States, said, and I quote from the transcript:

If past is prologue, we know what the results will be. Almost 200 years ago, trade barriers vanished in the United States part of this continent after the new Constitution took effect. Almost immediately, a stagnant national economy began to boom. The U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement is a new economic constitution for North America.

The President is really saying that the Canadian economy is becoming part of a North American economy under American direction. Why did the Government of Canada sign a trade agreement that represents a new economic constitution for North America, a trade agreement that is a sell-out of our independent economic identity on the northern half of this continent?

● (1420)

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Privy Council and President of the Treasury Board): Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition continues to make outlandish statements and sow the seeds of fear and apprehension in the minds of Canadians. I think he recognizes—and he is a bit of a salesman himself—that this is an arrangement that has to be sold on both sides of the border.

Clearly, the United States administration, indeed, members of Congress, who believe in the liberalization of trade, will be out selling the package. I think the President of the United States was engaged in that particular effort during the process of the debate in Canada. I would hope that we might engage in an enlightened debate without the use of fear and without the use of exaggeration, but really sticking to the facts.

I invite the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition to reread the document and to stick to the facts. Quite frankly, I think that Canadians are prepared to engage in an enlightened debate. I invite him to join in that process.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!