

Oral Questions

calls from B.C. and also handles calls from the continental U.S.A. Those U.S. originating calls constitute 30 per cent of the workload in the reservations office, which amounts to about 90,000 calls a month.

On May 8, 1990, Canadian Air announced its intention to open an office in Tampa, Florida and to hire 130 people to do the job in Tampa. The employer claims no one will be laid off. The workers do not believe it.

Is this movement of Canadian jobs to Tampa by Canadian Air the result of deregulation? Is it the result of free trade? Or, is it the result of a Canadian company chasing a buck at the expense of its workers?

Whatever the reason, the workers at Canadian Air believe those jobs should stay in Canada. They have mounted a campaign which my colleagues and I support that says to Canadian Air: "Don't Tampa with my job".

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TRADE

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister.

It has been reported today that the Minister for International Trade had a meeting in Montreal last Tuesday with the Mexican Minister of Trade. I ask the Deputy Prime Minister: Why did the Minister for International Trade have this meeting behind closed doors and exactly what was the purpose of this meeting?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition himself was for a long time a minister of the Crown. He knows it is not extraordinary for ministers to hold meetings behind closed doors—

An hon. member: Just a normal secret meeting.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Not for any government, if I may say so to the member for Vancouver Quadra.

There is a suggestion that this was a secret meeting. It was not secret at all. It was a normal meeting, suggested by the Mexicans who wanted to bring Canada up to date about their views on discussions they are having with the

United States in regard to the possibility of a trade agreement between the United States and Mexico.

We were pleased that during the discussion the Mexicans undertook to keep Canada fully advised and fully briefed on developments in those discussions between Mexico and the U.S. which may be of interest to Canada.

Hon. Herb Gray (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said that the meeting in question, which he admits was a secret meeting, was for the purpose of the Mexican Minister for International Trade informing our Minister for International Trade about the progress of talks between the United States and Mexico. I am sure the President of Mexico would be intrigued by this answer because yesterday in Mexico City he said that these talks were "to create the conditions for greater dialogue with the objective of establishing a free trade agreement with Canada".

• (1420)

I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs or the Deputy Prime Minister: Is the government now involved in discussions with the objective of establishing a free trade agreement between Canada and Mexico? If so, why is the government doing this without first having wide consultations with Canadians on whether this should be done at all?

Should the government not first have open public hearings through the external affairs and trade committee of this House, bearing in mind the serious possible adverse impact of such an agreement on jobs and industry in this country?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the answer to the question is a categoric no. There are no discussions under way between Canada and Mexico with an eye to concluding a free trade agreement between Canada and Mexico, none.

What is happening is that there has been an agreement by the President of Mexico and the President of the United States to have their senior officials consider whether it is sensible for those two countries to enter into a trade agreement. Naturally an agreement of that kind may affect Canada's interests. Naturally Canada wants to know whether our interests are affected. When we have that kind of information we will come to a