

The Address—Miss Carney

We have the advice of a wide array of private-sector experts and as the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has consistently said, if our negotiations do not result in a better deal for Canada, there will be no deal. However, I believe it is our responsibility to try. We believe that trade problems over the past few years in such sectors as lumber, fish, pork and steel prove that existing trade rules must be improved.

We cannot improve the situation by simply turning our backs and walking away. We have the choice of negotiating to advance our interests or we can run away and let others unilaterally set the rules for us. We chose to negotiate, not because it is popular, not because it is easy, but because it is in the national interest of Canada and of Canadians.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, first I would like to offer my congratulations to the Minister on being appointed to her new position. It is not possible to do so in Question Period and I am pleased to do so now.

I would, however, note that yet again the Government, through the words of the Minister, has relied on insults with respect to her critics. She has suggested that they have no answers. I suggest that she might wish to listen, as we listened to her speech today, when we speak later next week. She will hear of the course we would be following in place of the course that is now being followed.

I would also note that I saw certain inaccuracies in the speech which has just been made, particularly with respect to GATT. As someone who attended the GATT meetings, I would have to say that there was a great deal of uneasiness and opposition expressed by European and Japanese delegates and GATT officials to the bilateral course which we were taking up with the United States. If the Minister is not aware of that, she should talk with the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) who led the delegation, or with the Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Hockin) who was there as well and could, I assume, report the same thing.

I have some questions which I would like to put very briefly, recognizing that it is not possible to have a full-scale debate at this stage. I might say that I look forward to the full-scale debate which was promised by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) when he first announced the initiative that is being taken toward the United States. This is a full-scale debate which has yet to be put before the House.

I have three questions. First, if we are concerned with such things as access to the United States, "Buy American" and a whole host of questions of restrictive protectionism within the United States, why do we not follow the route of GATT now that the GATT talks are under way after Punta del Este and carry these discussions with the United States forward with the strong support of allies who are equally concerned with each of these points which the Minister has considered in her speech? The Japanese, for instance, would be such strong allies.

• (1620)

Second, will we finally have the mandate of Mr. Reisman made public to the House now that he has finished his first round of discussions and the Premiers have been filled in?

Third, if I may, could I please plead with the Minister to make a change in her approach and the approach of her predecessor and to take the Canadian people into the confidence of the Government in respect of precisely what is the mandate of Mr. Reisman in these talks, instead of carrying forward this cloak and dagger diplomacy which is out of place between two modern democracies?

Miss Carney: Mr. Speaker, to address the concerns expressed by the Hon. Member, I looked again at my speaking notes. I cannot see any reference to these insults which the Hon. Member identified. I believe the only comment I made about the critics was to say that they have the responsibility to address these same realities and to tell Canadians how their policies will meet the needs of Canadians today. If asking the opposition Parties, and particularly the NDP, to put forward their policies is an insult, it speaks to the nature of the policies, not to the opportunity provided by the Government to produce them.

In answer to the specific questions raised by the Hon. Member, when he talks about the need to take allies into our discussions with the U.S., he does not seem to understand that we have a unique relationship with the U.S. It takes 78 per cent of our exports and, in turn, we are the United States, biggest customer. One province alone, Ontario, sells as much to the U.S. as does Japan. There is little to be gained by taking outside of GATT some sort of regional bloc, which he seems to be suggesting, composed of Europe, Japan, and the U.S. We are talking about GATT and we are talking about a bilateral arrangement. I also want to assure him that I thought he might have understood, or maybe he would have learned at Punta del Este that under Section 24 of the GATT these bilateral arrangements are allowed. That is why there is a European Community. That is why there is a European Free Trade Association.

I do not understand how he could indicate that Europeans were concerned about a bilateral arrangement between Canada and the U.S. when they are members of the very same kind of regional trading arrangement that allows them access to 265 million people. We, with our 26 million people, are the only industrialized country in the world that does not have secure access to a market of at least 100 million people. I think they were concerned about protectionism at the GATT; everyone is concerned about the rising tide of protectionism. However, I would suggest that the support Canada gave other countries in their objectives in the GATT will alleviate their fears.

Also, the Hon. Member asked about Simon Reisman's mandate and about taking Canadians into confidence in the negotiations. I have certainly tried to be as open as I can about the negotiations. However, I do not understand how one can