

Oral Questions

asking for. What have you got to lose by including water in the trade deal? Tell us now.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the free trade agreement cannot now be amended. It is before the U.S. Congress and it is before this House, but not only that, there is no need to amend it. There is no danger unless the Hon. Leader of the Opposition gets into power and wants to treat water like a commodity and make some money on it.

The Hon. Member quoted Iowa Republican Representative Grandy who made certain comments which he said were based on comments made by a U.S. trade official at a discussion on trade issues organized by Grandy for his constituents. He never had any conversation with Mr. Yeutter. He has no information from Mr. Yeutter on this matter.

The U.S. trade office will confirm that water in its natural state is not a subject of the free trade agreement. Only bottled water is, the same as compressed air. I know the hon. gentleman is going to go racing around the country now saying, "Watch out for the air, watch out for the air, because it is being sold to the United States under the free trade agreement," just like the little red hen.

• (1430)

PROPOSED CHICAGO CANAL WATER DIVERSION

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister.

Mr. Rodriguez: Which one?

Mr. Langdon: I am not sure which is the best actor over there.

A water diversion increase of three times the amount presently going through the Chicago diversion, which is what is being proposed by various U.S. Senators and Governors—

Mr. McDermid: Wrong! Name the second Governor.

Mr. Langdon: —would decrease the water level in Lake Huron by up to nine inches, by five inches in Lake Erie, and would have a tremendous effect on water quality, hydroelectric production, shipping and recreation. It is not a laughing matter.

Given this significant danger will the Acting Prime Minister show leadership and see to it that this House unanimously passes a resolution to be conveyed to the U.S. which indicates our complete opposition to any increase in the Chicago diversion?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the House will be happy to know, and I believe the House already knows, that we have conveyed the strong views of this Government to the U.S., and I am sure those are the views of all Members of the House. We have had our Ambassador visit and set out our position very clearly. Our

position was also stated clearly by the Attorney General, I believe it was, on Friday.

We take the position that Canadian consent is needed for any such diversion of water as proposed by one or two Governors, not by all. Our view is not based on any interpretation of U.S. domestic law. We say the obligation to get Canada's consent is governed by international law and is based on a number of bilateral treaties, agreements and exchanges of notes between Canada and the U.S., including the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty, the 1959 Niagara River Treaty, and the exchange of notes on the Long Lac-Ogoki diversion, as well as the practice of the two countries going back to the early 1940s.

In all that time no unilateral diversions have been undertaken by either country, and we fully expect that this proposal will be rejected also. There will be no diversion with our consent and the U.S. knows forcefully and well that we object strongly to this proposal.

REQUEST THAT AGREEMENT BE AMENDED

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, the same detailed report of the International Joint Commission reviewed this whole question in 1985 and indicated that unfortunately there is an ambiguity in our legal right to prevent the U.S. from diverting water from Lake Michigan. Given that unfortunate fact, will the Government move to do something about the ambiguity by amending the trade deal so as to block water diversions from the Great Lakes to the U.S., whether through the Chicago diversion or some other diversion south of Lake Superior, or any place else in the Great Lakes Basin? Otherwise, the impact on our country would be disastrous.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot of warnings from the hon. gentleman about disasters to befall Canada. I am sure if there was a serious diversion of water, that would be of serious concern to Canada. However, we do not believe there to be any ambiguity in the practices which have been followed since the early 1940s, or in international law. We always know, of course, that there can be arguments about what the law is.

Our position is there is no ambiguity, but if there is we know that our relationship with the U.S. is a good, solid, honest, cooperative one and we feel sure that the U.S. administration will listen to our representations, apart altogether from laws and ambiguities that might surround any issue.

GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, the former Minister for International Trade, who negotiated this infamous trade deal, said she is against even considering the possibility of an amendment. What is it that prevents the Government from putting such a simple safeguard in a trade deal? What is it that prevents the Government from standing up on behalf of Canadians for once and doing what it should