

Oral Questions

Mr. Mulroney: My hon. friend from Newfoundland says that is a long way to go for a photo-op. What about dear Jean going down to get his picture taken with George?

Mr. Barrett: Look what happened to George.

Mr. Mulroney: I hate to do this but I have to give him a 10 for that, and that is bad news for President Clinton. I will be around but I am not sure about the other guy.

The question was in regard to trade. I said that the President has indicated many times that he is going to sign the NAFTA as it is. He proposes to bring in supplemental agreements with Mexico, particularly in regard to some of the points that he has mentioned that do not impact on the NAFTA as concluded. President Clinton: "That's right".

Then he goes on to say, by the way, for the interest of the member for LaSalle—Émard: "And I might add that Prime Minister Mulroney's administration in Canada has had a very strong record on the environment".

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister is right in so far as—

Some hon. members: Hear, hear.

Mr. MacLaren: —he stated the situation. He will know that President Clinton during the election campaign said he would not proceed with implementation—and I underline the word implementation—of the NAFTA, an unchanged NAFTA, but he would not proceed with implementation of the NAFTA until such time as the supplementary accords on the environment and on labour standards were negotiated.

Let me ask the Prime Minister this question. We all know that the recent events with regard to pork and steel have been the result of an absence of any agreement on subsidies. Would the Prime Minister on behalf of Canada express the Canadian interest by seeking a supplementary agreement on subsidies to parallel President Clinton's emphasis on supplementary agreements on the environment and on labour standards?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend mentions President Clinton's position during the election campaign. I just referred him to President Clinton's position Friday afternoon which is very clear: that the NAFTA is a stand-alone agreement which he supports as it is. Implementation takes place—

Mr. Tobin: No, Brian, no.

Mr. Mulroney: The member for Newfoundland is now an expert on President Clinton's thinking.

Mr. Tobin: Starting to get under your skin.

Mr. Mulroney: No, you do not get under my skin, Brian. I just saw the rat pack take down one Liberal leader and you are in the process of—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mulroney: With regard to the question of my hon. friend, the question that he raises is being developed and resolved at the GATT.

I indicated to the President that in our judgment one of the best things he could do to assert beneficial leadership for the United States and for all trading partners was to conclude an agreement at the GATT at the earliest possible moment, because among other things this would deal with the matter that my hon. friend has quite properly raised. Failure to resolve the GATT and a loss of the Uruguay round could have damaging effects on all countries, the United States along with Canada.

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BELL CANADA

Mr. Guy H. Arseneault (Restigouche—Chaleur): Mr. Speaker, on Friday, Bell Canada said that it wanted to increase basic monthly phone bills for millions of subscribers not once but twice this year, and in some cases charging an incredible 60 per cent more.

Given that Bell's move could cause similar applications by phone companies from Newfoundland to B.C. and given that this government has already put Canadians in tough economic times, what assurances will the government give Canadians today that they will continue to have access to telephone service that is both universal and affordable?

[Translation]

Hon. Pierre H. Vincent (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs and Minister of State (Indian Affairs and Northern Development)): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member must know that Bell Canada's application will be submitted to the CRTC, and having spoken on the weekend to representatives of the Association des consommateurs du Québec, I know they will make their representations with the best interests of the consumer in mind.