

Oral Questions

to oppose the trade negotiations, it has been seeking to have us reveal the details of the negotiation on the floor of the House of Commons.

Mr. Broadbent: Have a good week-end, Joe. Take a rest.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): That, obviously, would give away our capacity to make a good deal for Canada. That might be the way Socialists negotiate. That is not the way this Government is going to negotiate, or seek to negotiate a trade arrangement with the United States which can secure Canadian jobs which are now being lost and which could open new opportunities for Canadian industries which need them.

Mr. Broadbent: Have a good week-end, Joe.

ORAL INDICATION GIVEN BY UNITED STATES NEGOTIATOR

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, the Secretary of State for External Affairs has just admitted that in the last meeting between the United States and Canadian trade negotiators, the United States trade negotiator gave an oral indication as to some of the details of what they are interested in with respect to investment in Canada.

● (1140)

I want to ask the Minister to use this opportunity to tell the House and Canadians exactly what was said by the American negotiator in these oral indications.

We are not asking for the Canadian position. We want to know what the Americans are asking for.

Can he tell us today what that is? Give us a straight answer for a change.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I have a great deal of respect for the Hon. House Leader of the Official Opposition, and I know that he knows about negotiations. I know that he would understand that we could not expect to have a successful negotiation were we to reveal all of our negotiating positions on the floor of the House of Commons. He would also know that we cannot reveal what the other side is putting on the table and expect not to reveal what we are putting on the table. We cannot publicize half of the process, without leading to a situation which would lead, inexorably, to the publicizing of the whole process.

That would damage Canadian interests, and I am sure the House Leader of the Official Opposition would not want that to happen.

STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO CANADIAN NEGOTIATOR

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, if the Government is so worried about prejudicing the negotiations—negotiations which so far do not seem to be in the best interests of Canada—why is the chief negotiator going public?

We are raising this subject because of the words used by the chief negotiator, who said that the Americans are calling for “broad investment access to Canada”.

Why is there this inconsistency between what he is saying now and what the chief negotiator has said? Why can't he tell us whether the Americans asked that culture be on the table; whether they asked that resources be on the table; whether they asked that this Government unravel its already weak Investment Canada Act?

I ask him again: Give us some straight answers for a change.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Just to set the record straight again, the House Leader of the Opposition and his colleagues have not been quoting in this House the words used by the chief negotiator, until today. They were using language to create false impressions, language that was false, and the record in that regard, I think, should be clear.

Our position on culture is known. We are not going to trade away Canadian culture.

Our position on official languages and other fundamental interests in this country is known. It has been the subject of debate in this House for some time.

I do not propose—and I know the House Leader of the Official Opposition would not seriously ask me to do so—to reveal, detail by detail, what is under discussion at the negotiating table, because that would be the way to subvert and destroy the negotiations.

An Hon. Member: And that is exactly what they want.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): I hope that that is not what the Liberal Party wants. I know that that is what the socialist Party wants. It is not what this Government wants.

ORAL REPRESENTATIONS MADE BY UNITED STATES NEGOTIATOR

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of External Affairs. Since he has indicated to the House that there have been these oral representations clearly made, since he has indicated, as well, that, as a cabinet Minister, clearly these have been communicated to him by the chief trade negotiator, is it not the responsibility of the Government of this country, which is now looking at widening the mandate of the trade talks, to come out and say so clearly to the Canadian people, so that they know what the points are that the Americans want to talk about?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is our responsibility as a Cabinet to consider proposals that are put forward by the Americans in this negotiation, and to consider them in the context of the Canadian national interest.