

AUTO PACT—NORTHERN AMERICAN CONTENT QUERY

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, for once the people of Canada would like to see the Government be clean, straight and truthful with the people of Canada.

I want to ask a question of the Parliamentary Secretary since the Prime Minister, who, I suppose does not specialize in this subject, has decided not reply. Is the auto trade item, the changing of the North American content provision from 50 per cent to 60 per cent, now being negotiated? Is it or is it not? Is there a proposed change in the wording of the dispute settlement mechanism? Have the Americans requested that the Jones Act be put on the table? Will the Hon. Member please give us a clear-cut, honest answer to that question?

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, by innuendo, I have been called a liar by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry this afternoon and now by the Leader of the New Democratic Party.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, no.

Mr. McDermid: Oh, yes, he has. He has made those accusations and I think they are totally unfair.

The Hon. Member knows full well that the Government has been open and honest with the people about this agreement right from the start—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Broadbent: That's why you're 25 per cent.

Mr. McDermid: I will remind the Hon. Member, if he can get his trained seals behind him to quiet down—

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Okay, Mr. Speaker, they are not trained.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Oshawa will put his next question.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT SIGNING OF AGREEMENT BE DELAYED FOR TWO MONTHS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, I have a last question for the Prime Minister.

Looking at the comments made by Canadian negotiators on the Canada-US Agreement, our two countries are now discussing changes in competition regulations concerning the automotive industry and a few others.

If that is true, would the Prime Minister now consider postponing for another two months the signing of the final Agreement, in order to give Canadians a chance to look at the final version?

Oral Questions

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, as I indicated to the Leader of the Opposition, the parties are now putting into a legal, final version the elements of the agreement that were tabled in this House early in October.

Of course, we are also discussing implementation procedures. That is a highly technical, very complex document that requires a tremendous amount of attention and care from the negotiators.

Of course, as in any negotiations or discussions of this kind, either party may raise a question, and the other of course has an obligation to listen.

But no formal negotiations are now involved. If at some point in the discussions there arose a situation of mutual benefit to both parties, well now, we would be in a position to consider it!

But we are in the process of approving the basic elements already submitted to this House, and I can assure the Hon. Member that contrary to one other trade deal, this time Hon. Members will have ample opportunity to discuss it.

[English]

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Canadians will recall that during the First Ministers' Conference, the Prime Minister gave the assurance to Premiers and particularly Atlantic Premiers that regional development programs would not be negatively affected by this economic union agreement between Canada and the United States. They will also recall with some alarm that those assurances were not acceptable to Atlantic Premiers, including the Premier of Nova Scotia, who said that he leaned toward this agreement but wanted to see it in writing.

This morning in Prince Edward Island, the Atlantic Provinces Chamber of Commerce refused to endorse the Government's economic union agreement unless regional development programs are clearly exempted in the final text of the Canada-U.S. economic union agreement.

● (1440)

Is the Prime Minister prepared to tell this House today, and be consistent with what he said last week on television during the First Ministers' Conference, that when the final text is released next week, if it is, it will contain language that will provide a clear and unambiguous exemption for regional development programs from U.S. trade law? Can he give us that commitment today?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I will give the following commitment. The language will clearly ensure that this is not, and I am quoting my hon. friend, "an economic union agreement". It is no such thing. It