

Oral Questions

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, let me put a question to this minister, so-called.

The fact of the matter is that he has now surrendered the sovereign right of Canada to manage its own resource.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: I ask the hon. member to put his question.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): It is too bad their brain power does not match their voice level.

Mr. Speaker, the question to the hon. minister is this. In this case, can the minister tell us, now that the precedent has been set and we have lost control over the management of that vital resource, how we are going to protect the interest of the east coast fishery, which is now vulnerable under Article 1205 of the free trade agreement and will now be subject to the same attack by the Americans to take away the right of Canadians to preserve, conserve, and process their fish on their own shores?

Mr. Siddon: First of all, Mr. Speaker, it is rather strange the hon. member would talk about negligence when he has neglected to concede that Canada has been a big victor, that we have realized great gains as a result of the free trade agreement with tens of thousands of jobs being created in Canada. I think he should begin to tell Canadians the truth in that respect. Tens of thousands of new jobs have been created in western Canada as a result of the free trade agreement.

Had the hon. member read the free trade panel report, and if he had consulted Section 716 in particular very carefully, he would have realized that Canada has sacrificed nothing in regard to our sovereign right to manage our fish stocks, and that prerogative remains solely with the Government of Canada and with the Minister of Fisheries, as reflected in the free trade panel report.

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CANADA-U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, while we are dealing with the question of that

Minister's negligence, I would like to ask the Prime Minister about another serious omission by one of his ministers.

This morning Mr. Halliday, the chief negotiator on the subsidy rounds of negotiations under the FTA, admitted that he has received no instructions whatsoever from the Minister for International Trade indicating what subjects should or should not be negotiated by Canada. In other words, everything is up for grabs—regional programs, our agricultural programs, our health programs, our social programs. They are all subject to the negotiation because we have a negligent minister not giving instructions.

Will the Prime Minister forthwith take action to correct that serious omission, issue guidelines clearly indicating what the guidelines are for our chief negotiator and state today in the House that the crucial programs affecting regional development, agriculture, unemployment insurance and social programs will not be negotiated in this round of the free trade deal?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): We have all learned long ago, Mr. Speaker, that when the hon. member has nothing to say he engages in abuse. He is now seeking to abuse a public servant who appeared before the committee. The public servant made it quite clear in his testimony to that committee that we are in a very preliminary stage of discussion with the United States, that there will not be the beginning of those kinds of bilateral discussions until the conclusion of the MTN round. The hon. member knows that. If he would pay more attention to the facts and less time trying to create false fears in the country, we would all be better served.

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AGRICULTURE

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): My question is for the Minister of Agriculture. Press reports indicate that Congressman Dan Rostenkowski, the chairman of an important trade committee in the United States Congress, has asked the International Trade Commission to gather data on subsidies paid to Canadian Durum wheat producers. Surely, this constitutes harassment by the United States administration and Congress.