

Oral Questions

matters of mutual interest, including energy, we would carry on our conversations at the official level. Those conversations have been going on for quite a while. They will continue, but I have not noticed any expression of reservation.

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• (1450)

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**CANADIAN REPRESENTATION AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

Hon. Ron Huntington (Capilano): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment. It concerns the five-year cyclical meeting to be held in Paris this month by ministers responsible for science and technology in member countries of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Can the minister explain to the House why it is that Canada's Minister of State for Science and Technology is not planning to attend this conference, particularly since the theme of the conference this year links science and technology to industrial strategy?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of State for Science and Technology and Minister of the Environment): Madam Speaker, I would very much like to attend the conference. Unfortunately, there is a meeting of the executive committee of the Council of Environment Ministers, of which I am the chairman, being held at the same time in Regina. Therefore I must be at that particular place. My colleague, the Minister of Communications, will be representing the Canadian government at that important conference in Paris.

Mr. Huntington: Madam Speaker, since it is my understanding that communications is not to be a high priority issue at that conference, and in light of the fact that the conference is cyclical and held only once every five years, is the minister saying that his priorities are mixed because the government is not placing a high emphasis on this important area to Canada and Canadian industry? Will the minister advise the House if he will extend an invitation for observer status to a member of the official opposition?

Mr. Roberts: Madam Speaker, I do not agree with the assumptions in the hon. member's question. There will be many representatives from Canada there, including the chairman of the National Research Council, representatives of the National Science and Engineering Research Council and representatives of the Ministry of State for Science and Technology. We will be ably represented, not only at the official level but, as I indicated earlier, by the Minister of Communications.

The involvement of the Ministry of Communications on the scientific side is quite extensive. There is no doubt on my part that this is an important meeting and that we will be ably represented.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**CANADA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS—RATIFICATION OF TREATIES BY U.S. SENATE**

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister, President Reagan, and a few others witnessed this morning the signing of two treaties by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and Secretary Haig, on behalf of the United States. My question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Does the minister have any commitment that the U.S. Senate will ratify either one or both of those treaties?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I think that even if the United States administration were to offer a commitment at this point that the Senate would do something, we would treat that with a certain degree of scepticism. Obviously, we could not have an assurance of that kind. All we have are assurances that the administration will do its best to secure that agreement.

With respect to the boundaries treaty, there have been soundings in the Senate which have indicated approval of that by the senators.

CANADIAN POLICY IN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS

Hon. Allan Lawrence (Durham-Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question relates to a story which appeared in a number of Canadian papers dated February 5, out of New York by Associated Press. In that story the Secretary of State for External Affairs is quoted as indicating that in future negotiations with the United States on any treaties, Canada would first demand that the U.S. Senate adopt a resolution committing itself to ratification of the treaties. Is the minister now swallowing those words, or is he disputing the quotation? Or is the minister changing his policy? Just what is he doing?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I apologize if I misunderstood the hon. gentleman in the first instance. I guess I did not hear the first part of his question. I take it he was referring to the two treaties which were signed this morning. If that is his concern, our policy did not take effect for those treaties because they were already through the process at that stage.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacGuigan: I want to tell the hon. member, and other hon. members, that with respect to the prospective west coast fisheries treaty concerning tuna, we are seeking and requiring exactly that kind of assurance from the U.S. Senate.