

Oral Questions

Americans and run away from a deal that might be good for Canada.

The New Democratic Party is either afraid of the Americans or it does not like them, one or the other.

Some Hon. Members: Both.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Or both. Their policy on this trade negotiation, as it was their policy on the Auto Pact, has been to run away from a deal. I believe that history will prove them as wrong with regard to this arrangement as it has proved them wrong with regard to the Auto Pact. They did not like the Auto Pact. We think the Auto Pact was good for Canada.

UNITED STATES DEADLINE FOR NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The Minister just told the House of Commons that there can be no good deal for Canada if we walk away from the negotiating table and leave Canada exposed. That would lead one to the conclusion that the Minister and the Government are determined now that they are going to have a deal. We are interested in the timetable that is now in place.

The fact is that the U.S. President is required by U.S. law to give notice no later than Sunday of the intention to present a deal to both Houses of the U.S. Congress, signed between Canada and the United States. Is the Minister telling Canadians that in the next two and one-half days, a complicated trade arrangement is going to be initialled with all the t's crossed and i's dotted? Or is he telling us that the President will merely give notice on Sunday of the intention to present a deal to Congress at a later date and that in fact these negotiations may continue beyond Sunday, in effect on Congress's time?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, just so the record is clear on part of the preamble, this Government will sign a trade deal if it is a good deal for Canada, and we will not sign a trade deal if it is not a good deal for Canada. That has been the case consistently and that remains the case.

The United States deadlines are the affair of the United States. We expect that we will have the proposal brought forward on the so-called fast-track basis. What the Americans might say, what the Americans might sign, how the Americans might authoritatively interpret their system, is in their hands. So far as we are concerned, there has been a development that makes us believe that it is worth while resuming negotiations and we are doing that. We hope that might yield a good result. If the negotiations turn out not to be fruitful, there will be no deal.

UNITED STATES TIMETABLE

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, let me repeat my question—

Some Hon. Members: No, no.

An Hon. Member: Spare us.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member, of course, can repeat the question. The Chair cannot guarantee there will be any different answer, but the Hon. Member has the floor.

Mr. McCurdy: Slowly this time.

Mr. Tobin: Yes, he may understand if I speak slower. What I am asking the Secretary of State, to be perfectly clear, is this: Can he assure us that any notice given by the President of the United States on Sunday will be notice of a deal completed versus merely notice by the U.S. President to present a deal within a week, two weeks, or three weeks?

What we want to know is whether or not Canada is going to participate in a process where in effect 585 Members of Congress are looking over the negotiators' shoulders as we commit ourselves to a deal in the absence of having completed the negotiations. If that is the case, our position will be dramatically weakened by a Government that obviously appears to want to have a deal at any cost.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has repeated his question, so let me repeat my answer.

Mr. Tobin: No answer, in other words.

FREEDOM OF INVESTMENT

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the same Minister. In the first two years of what Canada has already given the United States in new investment freedom, Investment Canada allowed 1,192 takeovers of Canadian firms. Will the Minister confirm what Mr. Yeutter told U.S. Congressmen in his briefing yesterday morning, that Canada is willing to give even more investment freedom to the United States? Is it giveaways like this that have really started these talks up again?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we really are going over a lot of old ground, but let me very quickly make two points which are well known to the House. As I said before, the positions of Canada that are known are the same positions we are carrying into the negotiations today, and we intend to respect Canadian interests. The second point, and I know there is an ideological obstacle to foreign investment on the part of the New Democratic Party, one of the reasons this Government has been so remarkably successful in job creation, creating over 900,000 new jobs since our election—

Mr. Tobin: Tell that to Peckford now.

Mr. Broadbent: Tell that to Getty.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): —is because we have changed the rules regarding investment. We have changed that old hostile