

national security and consumer interests, it did not also provide Canadian and Quebec francophones guarantees that the French fact would be protected in Canada and that Quebec would still have the right to legislate in linguistic matters?

[English]

**Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I am only sorry I cannot respond in the French language. I am still not comfortable with it, although working at it. Let me say that there is absolutely nothing in the free trade agreement—nothing whatsoever—that will interfere with the bilingual nature of this country, or the requirements we have in Canada under bilingualism—absolutely nothing. That has been reinforced not only by our trade negotiators but by Ministers from the Quebec Government who have looked at it very, very carefully. I can assure the Hon. Member, and all Francophones in this country, that there is nothing in this agreement that would take away from the bilingual nature of our country.

[Translation]

#### REQUEST FOR GUARANTEES

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. Two Quebec Ministers have said that they expect changes to be made to the agreement and that if these include no guarantee of protection, they would withdraw their support for the agreement. What I would like to ask the Parliamentary Secretary is this. There is of course nothing in the agreement which prevents bilingualism, but why did the Government not ensure that the agreement would include the assurance by the Americans that all products sold in Canada and Quebec will bear instructions in both official languages, and that all documents and instructions for all types of appliances will be written in both official languages? Why did the Government not include this guarantee instead of saying that there was nothing to prevent it? It is essential to have guarantees to make sure that, in ten years, when our children receive an electric appliance from the United States, they will find instructions in both French and English. Why not include this guarantee?

[English]

**Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I find it passing strange that the Hon. Member would try to make a political issue out of this.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. McDermid:** I want to make it very, very clear that there is absolutely nothing in the agreement that would take away from the bilingual nature of our country. Second, this is a trade agreement. It is not a social agreement. It is not a social policy document. It is a trade agreement. It has to do with trade, trade between the two largest trading partners in the world. There is nothing in this agreement that will interfere

with the bilingual nature of this country, or the laws affecting biculturalism or bilingualism, whatsoever.

There is no reason to place that in a trade document which was negotiated, because we are talking about trade, we are not talking about language differences.

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### MIGRATORY BIRDS CONVENTION ACT

#### CHARGES LAID AGAINST JAMES BAY AREA INDIANS

**Mr. Jim Edwards (Edmonton South):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada. The Minister will be aware that charges were laid earlier this fall against 10 native Indians under the Migratory Birds Convention Act. These persons reside in the James Bay area. It is a serious question, because the Minister will also know that native people rely on this hunt for their sustenance and have traditionally hunted these lands in the past.

Could the Attorney General please advise the House whether he has had an opportunity to review the matter, and what he intends to do with respect to these charges?

**Hon. Ray Hnatyshyn (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada):** Mr. Speaker, I have indeed had an opportunity to review the circumstances in this case and have decided to exercise my discretion as Attorney General of Canada to stay the proceedings.

The past practice has demonstrated a leniency with respect to the enforcement of this provision of the law with regard to our aboriginal peoples. It is not surprising that the Indian people have thought they were quite entitled to hunt in a way that would provide food for them, notwithstanding the rather straightforward provisions of the Migratory Birds Convention Act. Therefore, while I think it is fair to say that the charges would be sustainable, it seems to me that discretion in this case in favour of staying the proceeding is the appropriate course to take with respect to our aboriginal peoples, and I have made that decision.

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### CONSUMER AFFAIRS

#### CHARTERED BANKS—INCREASED SERVICE CHARGES

**Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. We have all received complaints from consumers across the country about bank service charges—and I know we can all count on the Commerce—but the fact is that the chartered banks hold a privileged position in our society. Not only do the big five hold virtual control over Canadian finances