

Oral Questions

SECURITY MEASURES—PROVISION OF PERSONNEL

Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the Minister will agree that the baggage match system is flawed in that if a terrorist wanted to bring a bomb on board, he could under the baggage match system. However, if the x-ray system were utilized with all baggage being x-rayed before being boarded on aircraft, security would be enhanced.

In September of 1985 a secret report which reviewed airline and airport security in Canada stated the following:

It could however, be argued that DOT rather than the carriers should provide the personnel necessary to operate the security measures for checking passengers, baggage, and cargo.

In light of the serious problems over the last few years, why did the Government not adopt this policy proposal?

● (1430)

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, we are following the system which was followed by our predecessor Government. Apparently it thought that the present system was in order. Its supporters are now having second thoughts.

I will point out once again to the hon. gentleman that which has been said by those who should know, not those who listen to CBC Radio at seven o'clock in the morning waiting to pick something up for Question Period so they will have something with which to fill their empty little minds and to ask about.

The aviation industry in Canada and the Canadian Government have taken the lead role in the development of a passenger baggage match system and have more than fulfilled their international commitments. We lead the world in airport baggage screening security according to the President of ICAO. I will take him over CBC Radio, lock, stock, and barrel, any day of the year.

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TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES TRADE AGREEMENT—DELAY IN PRODUCING FINAL TEXT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. He will recall that when he initialled the trade deal on October 4 he said that we would see the final deal in a matter of two or three weeks because only the legal wording was being worked on.

We see in news reports today that Simon Reisman indicates that the main areas of disagreement which exist include maritime shipping, energy, textiles, autos, and the dispute settlement mechanism. These are, in a sense, the major portions of the entire agreement.

Will the Prime Minister of Canada please explain to us just what is going on and when we can expect to see the final draft?

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure that the Hon. Member can show us anything that says that Mr. Reisman said this is what they are talking about. I read the same story from which the Hon. Member is reading. It says "apparently" this is what is holding them up.

They are down to the final stages in solving the interpretation problems with the agreement as they are putting it together. We are hopeful that it will be available for this House and the Canadian people in the very near future.

Mr. Cassidy: You've been saying that for weeks.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, we have been hearing about these final stages and that it is 99 per cent complete for weeks on end.

PROJECTED DEADLINE FOR PRODUCTION OF FINAL TEXT

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. After the initialing of the agreement, "the most important trade deal in trade history", in the words of the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister promised the people of Canada that they would see the completed text by the end of October.

That time has now come and gone. He then promised the people of Canada that the final text would be available by the middle of November which would allow ample time for evaluation. That did not occur. He then said that it would be available by the end of November. That did not occur.

Will the Prime Minister indicate what his most recent promise is as to when the people of Canada will see the final text so that they can make a fair, total, and accurate evaluation of the deal?

Mr. Cassidy: Answer, Brian. Don't chicken out.

Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister did not make those statements in the way in which the Hon. Member said that he did. That is very unfair and he knows it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Cassidy: He did and the people of Canada know it.

Mr. McDermid: The Prime Minister said we hoped to have it in three weeks time. He did not promise it in three weeks time.

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap has asked a question and the Parliamentary Secretary is replying. I know that the Hon. Member would want his own colleagues to give the Parliamentary Secretary a chance to reply.