

ance of the Government of Mexico, and of their willingness—

**Mr. Barrett:** Nonsense! That's not what the minister was saying.

**Mr. Clark (Yellowhead):** Perhaps if the former premier of British Columbia has a question that he would like to raise he could stand in his place and raise it, or he could perhaps arrange for a microphone that he could affix to his chest—

**Mr. Barrett:** That's not what the minister was saying.

**Mr. Speaker:** Perhaps the right hon. minister could answer the question.

**Mr. Clark (Yellowhead):** To return to the very reasonable question that was put by my colleague for Winnipeg South Centre, that is what is going on between—

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Clark (Yellowhead):** Mr. Speaker, it is not every day that you get to be acting prime minister.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark (Yellowhead):** As has been indicated in the House before, we will be watching discussions that might or might not evolve between the United States and Mexico to see if Canadian interests are affected. If it appears that Canadian interests might be affected, then we will consider what action it would be appropriate for the Government of Canada to take.

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I will just say to the right hon. minister that this is the second time he has had an opportunity to be an acting prime minister.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I want to get a very specific commitment from this minister on behalf of the government.

We want to have the assurance that this government will not commit Canada to any involvement in these discussions or negotiations until Parliament has had an opportunity to hold public hearings, have a public debate in this House and a mandate from this Parliament, if they so desire. Can we get that commitment today?

### *Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, for some the opportunity to be an acting prime minister never comes.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh!

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Clark (Yellowhead):** We will certainly keep the House of Commons advised of any decisions that we think would be in the interests of the country to pursue with regard to any trade negotiations.

The hon. member will know better than most that when a Liberal government was in office and Canada entered into the GATT, that arrangement was carried out in absolute secrecy. The House was never told. There were not public hearings, there was not debate.

We followed a very different arrangement with regard to the free trade agreement.

If—and I underline “if”—a time arrives when we think that it might be useful to look at other kinds of trading arrangements, naturally there will be the fullest consultation with the House.

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[*Translation*]

### MULTICULTURALISM

**Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville):** Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of State for Multiculturalism and Citizenship, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. Following the cuts for cultural groups and the elimination of subsidies for heritage language schools, the minister ordered a study to analyse the possibility of creating a new national race relations network.

Can the minister explain the need for a new network to us? Is he afraid to hear criticisms from democratically elected community groups?

[*English*]

**Mrs. Pauline Browes (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada and Minister of State (Multiculturalism and Citizenship)):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today that we have been entertaining the ethnocultural lobby day and an opportunity to speak firsthand with some of the leaders of the community.