

HOUSE OF COMMONS

MEMBERS' DUTY

Mrs. Claudy Mailly (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, we want to sit during the summer, and I shall be pleased to do so.

During the last election, I made a commitment, along with my party, to bring about a change in our public life. Three major principles have been developed to accomplish these necessary changes: national reconciliation; sounder public finances; and enhanced international relations.

The bills which have been held up by the Liberal Senate and still are by the Senate as well as this House, by this irresponsible Opposition, are essential to the advancement of Quebec and of my region, the Outaouais. I am speaking of the Meech Lake Accord, of Bill C-22 on pharmaceutical products which was held up so long in the Senate and which, today, is already creating jobs in Quebec. I am speaking of Free Trade and of Bill C-72. These measures ought to be adopted. The Opposition and the Liberal Senate who are blocking them should be ashamed!

We will sacrifice our summer, Mr. Speaker, in order to fulfill our duty towards our fellow citizens of Quebec and Canada.

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT—LENGTH OF PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE—WASHINGTON MEETINGS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister and of the Minister for Trade, I will put a question or two to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Today marks the nine hundred and eighty-eighth day of negotiation between Canada and the United States on the Prime Minister's trade deal. Yet next week the House of Commons is being asked to debate whether or not this deal should be approved in principle. We as Members of Parliament are being allowed the sum total of five days to pronounce upon this very important closed arrangement with the United States, five days proposed by an anti-democratic Government.

Since the Prime Minister is still negotiating, since nobody has yet seen the American legislation, since there are obvious disagreements between the United States and Canada still at this point, will the Deputy Prime Minister have the common decency to tell Canadians what is going on?

What happened at the meetings conducted by the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff in Washington or aren't Canadians allowed to know that? What are the difficulties between our

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two countries on the issue of subsidies and on the dispute settlement mechanism? Why is Parliament being asked to debate this legislation when the key items between the two countries have still obviously not been resolved?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, first the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition should not try to mislead Canadians by suggesting that all we are going to have is a five-day debate on the trade legislation.

He knows very well that on second reading debate we have offered five days and asked for the Opposition to consider other alternatives. Discussions have been going on. There has been no other alternative proposal advanced of which I am aware. But the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition knows that there will be extensive committee study and he knows, as a distinguished parliamentarian, that it is in the committee study where one gets into clause by clause analysis and examination. Surely he would be interested in facilitating that process. We also would be very interested in hearing what he has to say in his contribution to the debate at second reading.

• (1120)

In so far as the discussions taking place between Canadian officials and the American officials are concerned, as has been pointed out before, it is important to ensure that the spirit of the free trade agreement is upheld. There were some concerns expressed by our Government in some particular areas. Those concerns are being addressed. In so far as the difficulties in the United States are concerned, there are obviously some internal legislative problems that are occurring, but we are confident that that will be ironed out.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, we have had 988 days of negotiation on a deal which we object to because it changes the fundamental political and economic direction of this country and impinges on our sovereignty. Yet, as my House Leader and the House Leader of the New Democratic Party confirm, we are being allowed five days to decide in principle whether the representatives of the people in the House of Commons approve the deal.

[Translation]

CONSTITUTIONAL VALIDITY OF DISPUTE SETTLEMENT MECHANISM—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Americans . . .

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order! The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition has the floor.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Conservative Members are a bit excited, Mr. Speaker, and rightly so, because the Americans are again discussing the constitutional validity of the dispute settlement mechanism.