

*Point of Order—Mr. Riis***TRADE**

CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS—DOMESTIC PRICE OF WHEAT

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade. Last night the provincial Premiers indicated a great deal of pessimism about progress in the free trade talks with the United States concerning agricultural programs and indicated that different formulas are being considered to get an agreement. What assurance can the Minister give that the Canadian Wheat Board and Canada's right to set the domestic price of wheat will not be bartered away in the free trade negotiations?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, these negotiations are in their most critical and sensitive stage. The negotiators are meeting all the time and Cabinet is meeting all the time on this issue. It would not be in the national interest to give specific positions at any given time on any given issue. That would hurt and harm the national interest in the negotiations.

I can only assure the Hon. Member by repeating what the Prime Minister has said on many occasions. It has to be a good deal for all of Canada. It has got to benefit all of Canada. It has got to meet our objectives. I am sure the Hon. Member can be reassured by that viewpoint.

Mr. Speaker: The final question.

CANADIAN POSITION

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, since these various scenarios are being considered by the Government, I wonder what it might trade off to get a deal, since that is being proposed by the Government? Can the Minister make it clear that agricultural programs, our supply management system, marketing boards and support programs will not be bartered away in the final hours of the negotiations a couple of weeks from this Sunday evening, or whenever that occurs?

Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, there are no such scenarios. There are no such trade-offs.

Mr. Foster: Premier Bourassa says there are.

Miss Carney: There is no agreement until there is an agreement. So the suggestion that there are trade-offs is simply not true. We have been explicit in this House on our position on these issues of marketing boards. Once again I refer the Hon. Member to the debate which took place in this House on March 16 and the motion we introduced which states:

That this House supports the negotiation of a bilateral trading arrangement with the United States, as part of the Government's multilateral trade policy, while protecting our policy sovereignty, social programs, agricultural marketing systems, the auto industry, and our unique cultural identity.

Those are the goals of the free trade agreement. Those are the goals we must achieve if there is to be a free trade agreement.

Mr. Speaker: Before proceeding with the ruling which it is my obligation to bring to the House, I want to indicate to the Hon. Member for St. John's East (Mr. Harris) that occasionally a Speaker perhaps does depart from the list. I know the Hon. Member will understand that. I am sure that tomorrow or at another time, I will endeavour—in fact, I will make a commitment—he will be recognized. I know he will understand.

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POINT OF ORDER

COMPLIANCE WITH S. O. 13(2)—EXTENSION OF BELLS—MR. SPEAKER'S RULING

Mr. Speaker: On September 1, 1987, the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis) raised a point of order relating to the circumstances surrounding the taking of a deferred division at six o'clock p.m. on August 31, specifically his concern that the bells had rung for longer than the 15 minute period provided for under the terms of Standing Order 13(5) under which the division was being taken. He spoke of the disruption to "orderly business" when Members expecting a division at a given time were made to wait beyond the appointed hour.

The Chair welcomes the Hon. Member's timely intervention on this important matter and wishes to thank other Hon. Members who offered their views on the same point.

[*Translation*]

The Hon. Member for Saint-Jacques referred to the provisions of the Standing Order which specifically states that the bells must be rung for 15 minutes at the most. He also mentioned the time-honoured tradition of the Whips' simultaneous entrance into the House to indicate that Hon. Members are ready to vote.

[*English*]

The Hon. Minister of State for the Treasury Board (Mr. Lewis) pointed out that "this is one of the rules of the House which works both ways at various times", and that this flexibility was not, in his view, being abused by the Opposition Parties, or by the Government.

[*Translation*]

The Hon. Member for Bourassa (Mr. Rossi) referred to the informal agreement which governs the Whips' entrance.

[*English*]

The Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) reminded the House of the extensive scrutiny which the special committee on reform of the House had given to division bells.