

Oral Questions

Mexicans told them quite clearly what their position was on their energy policy, which is not on the table at all.

When will the government let Canadians know what its objectives are in these talks? After all, the government should realize that Canadian citizens will have to pay for the unsatisfactory way the government is conducting negotiations with these two countries.

[English]

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, it has always been quite clear what the goals of the Government of Canada are in the NAFTA negotiations. They have been read in this House many, many times.

Obviously improved access to the Mexican market. We want useful extensions to the FTA, if that is at all possible, and we want to preserve what is best in the free trade agreement with the United States.

Obviously this is exactly what any Government of Canada would be at the table for.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask another question on trade matters.

Today we realized for good why the Americans have imposed a 14.5 per cent tax on Canadian softwood lumber. We know what they want to achieve. They would like the jobs we have in that industry in Canada to be transferred to the states of Washington and Oregon.

I would like to know from the government when it will make clear to the Americans that the Canadian woods are for jobs in Canada and that we will never export our jobs in that industry to the states of Washington and Oregon.

Hon. Frank Oberle (Minister of Forestry): Mr. Speaker, if there is any confusion about that in anyone's mind, it surprises me that it should be in the mind of the Leader of the Opposition. That has always been the Canadian position and always will be the Canadian position.

I should, however, point out to my hon. friend that the Americans do have an absolute ban on exports of round logs and raw materials from federal lands in the Pacific northwest. We have from time to time issued export permits for some materials that are simply surplus to our needs, and that would I suppose continue to be our practice.

• (1420)

I agree with my hon. friend that the senators have given us a proposition now, as I understand it, to terminate the imposition of an import tax if we were to open up our border for export logs. We are not looking at this proposition seriously.

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, there are so many questions in trade that I would like to ask a third question.

The beer industry in Canada has to accept the decision of the GATT, but it is very important for it and for the workers in that field to know clearly from the government—and I would like to know that from the Deputy Prime Minister—what it intends to do.

Will it accept the push by the Americans who want no period of adjustment, or will the government say very clearly today that it will give two, three or four years to the industry to adjust to this new reality?

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada has already clearly indicated its position on this matter. We propose a three-year adjustment period, and that is exactly what we will fight for.

[Translation]

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. In response to my question two weeks ago, the Minister for International Trade said that the U.S. and Mexican positions on textiles were unacceptable. My question is this: What does he intend to do to ensure that his Minister for International Trade does not change his mind during the current talks in Montreal, as he did during the free trade talks with the Americans in Washington?

[English]

Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science): Mr. Speaker, it is quite clear what we want in terms of textiles. We want to ensure that the NAFTA maintains and improves the preferential access to the United