

Oral Questions

Mr. Mulroney: The current job creation rate is better than it was in the past, from 1980 to 1984. So I would suggest that in co-operation with the Quebec Government we are creating jobs at a relatively impressive rate, not fast enough but impressive still. As to policies of regional development, we are firmly convinced that regional development must be geared to regional needs. In the Atlantic and Western Canada regions, for example, our policy is such that instead of having bureaucrats in Ottawa who impose their will on the regions, the regions are now working with the federal Government to draft policies which apply directly to them.

● (1440)

[English]

RECALL OF HOUSE

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, after peeling off the Western Rediversification Program, the Atlantic Opportunities Program and the Northern Ontario Program, we have a Minister with no department left.

I will give the Prime Minister another example of shaping legislation in order to satisfy our American friends in the course of these trade negotiations. We all know that the real reason Parliament was recalled was to pass legislation to inflict higher drug prices upon Canadians. That is the real reason.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The Prime Minister was not able to convince you three or four weeks ago, Mr. Speaker, and he tried another tack.

Are these trade negotiations really so important to the Prime Minister and his Government that he is willing to sacrifice our elderly and our sick and inflict upon them higher drug prices merely to keep these trade negotiations going?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think a couple of more weeks at the lake would have done the right hon. gentleman a lot of good.

An Hon. Member: A couple more years.

Mr. Mulroney: Someone says "a couple more years". Who knows?

The reason for the recall of Parliament is that Canada's immigration and refugee system, which is held in such high regard, was in the process of being abused. When it is abused it is diminished and unfairness creeps into the system. That unfairness then destroys what is an otherwise very valid national apparatus and international attraction.

We have asked parliamentarians to come back to deal with this very, very serious matter. We do not agree with those voices which suggest that we should turn ships away. That is

unacceptable to us. However, the system itself must be cleansed of abuse.

I know that my right hon. friend will join with us, not in dilatory measures, in agreeing to conditions which will allow us to expedite this important piece of legislation through the House of Commons so that all Canadians can have the assurance that those abuses which diminish our system cease.

Mr. Gauthier: Give him a copy of the Bill.

EFFECT OF FREE TRADE ON REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I wish to raise a question with the Prime Minister, but I will first offer the kindly suggestion that after his last statement he might be well advised to read Bill C-84 which his Minister of Employment and Immigration introduced this morning. He may find out exactly who wants to turn the ships away.

Officials in the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion, before their demise, produced a report which has now been released, or found out, which suggests that in every region of the country the free trade arrangement with the United States will substantially undermine key industries, resulting in enormous job losses in every single region and that, furthermore, the ability of both the federal and provincial Governments to deliver regional development programs will be undermined by a free trade deal.

Taking into account that that is the conclusion of federal officials, can the Prime Minister promise that before any deal is signed with the Americans the Government will properly divulge what the costs of all those job losses will be and what the impact upon all the regional development programs will be so that Canadians will know what to expect by way of a free trade arrangement?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I did not think I needed to add, in my response to my hon. friend with regard to turning ships back, "without lawful authorization".

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: Once the House has granted its authority, if it does, that will, of course, become an entirely appropriate gesture for the people of Canada to exercise. However, without that authorization that, of course, is a different matter.

With regard to the specific question, my hon. friend will agree that all of the documentation which has been established so far, from the Economic Council of Canada, the C.D. Howe Institute, the research institutes and think-tanks, concurs in the judgment, as best we can see, that a comprehensive free trade arrangement would result in more jobs in virtually all sectors of the economy.