

### Oral Questions

Why has the government changed what was supposed to be a 10-year phase-out period for this manufacturing of truck trailers and instead accelerated the phase-out of these tariffs so that they have resulted in the wiping out of an entire industry and 1,300 jobs here in Canada?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend surely knows because he is the trade critic. I might add *The Financial Post* says that the leader of the NDP's trade minister would cut a lonely figure sitting at tables all by himself. If I were the hon. member I would want to change my responsibilities very quickly.

The point of the matter is that any time there is tariff acceleration in the free trade between the United States and Canada it has to be with the agreement of industries in both countries. On that basis, we have gone ahead.

I point out there have been two major accelerated reductions in tariffs amounting to some \$8 billion of trade which my hon. friend forgets accrues to the benefit of consumers in the countries involved. The consumers are the great beneficiaries of free trade. They get lower prices as a result of elimination of tariffs and they get a greater variety of products to buy.

**Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade will shortly introduce the North American free trade legislation.

He says that in the United States the government has also begun the legislative process. He knows, however, that the President of the United States and the United States chief trade negotiator have both said that the President will not present the NAFTA legislation to Congress until such time as the United States gets its three supplementary or parallel accords, one on the environment, one on labour and one on import surges.

Can the minister tell the House and the Canadian people why he is proceeding when he knows that those three parallel agreements will substantially modify the terms and operation of the proposed North American free trade agreement?

Why do the minister and the government not wait until such time as we are aware of the nature of those parallel accords so we can be certain of what it is this government is asking the Canadian people to adopt?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I can say absolutely that the side agreements will not substantially modify the agreement signed in December by all three countries.

President Salinas, President Clinton and our Prime Minister have all agreed there will be no change to the agreement signed in December 1992. It will not be reopened. It will be implemented on January 1, 1994.

The side agreements are supplemental agreements. They are to add certain aspects in the areas of environment, labour and possibly import surges and will be ancillary to the free trade agreement itself. They will not change the substance of the agreement in any way.

**Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North):** Mr. Speaker, that answer contradicts what the minister said yesterday.

He said that a year ago he put forward on behalf of Canada positions on the environment and on labour standards which would have substantially changed the treaty itself. Those positions were rejected by the United States and Mexico.

Yesterday the minister said he is going to bring forward those positions again. Today, however, he says they will not change the agreement.

• (1500)

Let me ask the minister one specific question. The minister well knows that any agreement on import surges will change the nature of NAFTA itself. It will affect the nature of dispute settlement. It will change the nature of the clauses in the treaty on import surges.

Will the minister explain to the Canadian people what our position is? Have we any position in Canada on those three areas? What are they?

**Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is asking questions which he should have put in the committee hearings when I appeared before it. I will be appearing again. I am sure we will have an opportunity to discuss them.

Let me be quite clear that on labour and on the environment the things we were proposing last February and since then is the establishment of two trilateral commissions. That has been accepted now with the environment. It looks like it could be accepted for labour matters and in that way develop a dialogue among the