

Oral Questions

● (1420)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in terms of offering concessions, what we are talking about is a matter that had been decided by an appropriate authority in the United States. They are saying that "if you want access to our markets, here is the price of poker." We contested that. We continue to contest it very vigorously.

Mr. Orlikow: What is the price?

An Hon. Member: Vigorously?

Mr. Mulroney: The cost of the original price of poker—very vigorously and very energetically.

Mr. Tobin: Spoken like a wimp.

Mr. Speaker: Hon. Members will realize that all Hon. Members in this Chamber have the right to be heard both when they are asking questions and when they are answering them. Comments such as I just heard do not make it easier for Hon. Members to do the task that is appointed to them. They lead to disorder in the Chamber. I would ask that all Hon. Members restrain themselves. The Hon. Prime Minister.

Mr. Mulroney: What is taking place, Mr. Speaker, as I say, with the endorsement of the First Ministers involved, is an approach designed to resolve a very complex matter in Canada's favour which would guarantee our ongoing access to the market. His Leader is briefing the Member. I will be happy to answer any further questions he may have.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, as a supplementary, I would say to the Prime Minister that I think the matter has only been compounded in its confusion by his last statement.

You say you are negotiating on some kind of proposal—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Axworthy: Pardon me. I will rephrase my question, Mr. Speaker. I would like to ask the Prime Minister why it is that we are making an offer about which we do not know any of the details at the same time as the Prime Minister is saying that we are continuing to pursue the matter in front of the U.S. tribunals and the international tribunal. You cannot be proposing to negotiate a deal, and at the same time say that the deal is no good before a tribunal. You cannot contradict yourself continually this way. We would like to know what is it that you are doing. Are you trying to negotiate a deal or are you going to pursue the matter before those tribunals?

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member knows very well that the last part of his question went well beyond what is the accepted standard. I know the Hon. Member wants to put his question with force, but I would remind the Hon. Member that the Chair has had to rise several times with respect to questions of

that sort. I know that the Hon. Member would please the House if he could put his questions with force and vigor, but I would ask that he be more careful about the use of the word you.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, I will rephrase the question, if I might. My question is for the Prime Minister. Is the Government now pursuing another final offer to the United States based upon imposing taxes here in Canada, or is it continuing to pursue the matter in the international tribunal and in the U.S. tribunals? What is it that the Government of Canada is proposing to do?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, we are seeking to reach agreement on an approach that will resolve a very complex matter in Canada's interest that will keep the \$600 to \$700 million a year in Canadian hands to be plowed back into, for example, the forestry in British Columbia as opposed to elsewhere.

My hon. friend refers to the question of contradictions in regard to trade negotiations. I refer to an analysis by Mr. Cohn of *The Toronto Star* in which he concludes:

Now, there are four Liberal positions on free trade: Johnston gung-ho for negotiations; Axworthy, calling for a moratorium; Gray, flat-out opposed. And then there is Turner . . . If there is confusion about all the crossed signals—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The Hon. Member for Oshawa.

MINISTER'S ANNOUNCEMENT

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question concerns the position of the Government of Canada. First the Minister for International Trade said there should be no bargaining because it would undermine our position which was before a tribunal. Then she undermined that by saying there would be a 10 per cent final offer. Then she went to a 15 per cent offer, and then at the First Ministers' meeting she announced there had been a deal with the Department of Commerce in the U.S. which was, within hours, denied by the Department of Commerce. Does the Prime Minister think the Government of Canada has any credibility left in terms of negotiating now?

● (1425)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I think the Leader of the New Democratic Party will want to deal from objective facts. He says that the Minister announced a deal. The Minister did not announce a deal. The Minister announced agreement among us all on an approach to attempt to resolve—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Axworthy: Now it's an approach.

Mr. Mulroney: The sidekick of the Leader of the NDP, the Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry—

Mr. Axworthy: Be nice now.