

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF ZAMBIAN MINISTER OF STATE FOR NATIONAL COMMISSION OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING

Mr. Speaker: I also wish to draw the attention of Hon. Members to the presence in the gallery of Mr. Lavu Mulimba, Minister of State for the National Commission of Development Planning for Zambia.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF UNITED STATES SECRETARY FOR HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Speaker: As well, I wish to draw the attention of Hon. Members to the presence in the gallery of Hon. Samuel R. Pierce, Jr., United States Secretary for Housing and Urban Development.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (1415)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TRADE

CANADIAN LUMBER EXPORTS—U.S. INDUSTRY'S PETITION SEEKING COUNTERVAIL DUTY

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Prime Minister and of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, my question is directed to the Deputy Prime Minister. He knows that Monday will be the deadline for a decision by the Secretary of Commerce of the United States, on behalf of the President, to react to the countervail petition of the American lumber industry against Canadian lumber. Will the Prime Minister be telephoning the President of the United States in order to impress upon him the importance of that decision for the survival of the Canadian lumber industry? Will that be arranged before a decision is taken by the Secretary of Commerce on behalf of the President?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member knows, a number of representations have been made to the United States Government. My colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, met with his counterpart, Mr. Shultz, last Friday. As well, I have spoken with Secretary Baker, and there was a meeting yesterday which included Members of Parliament. I think it is quite clear to the United States what is our position on this matter. The decision will be taken in due course, but it will be based upon full knowledge of the position of the Government of Canada.

[Translation]

INQUIRY WHY PRIME MINISTER DOES NOT TELEPHONE UNITED STATES PRESIDENT CONCERNING CANADIAN FOREST INDUSTRY

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary. The Minister of Finance knows perfectly well that the Secretary of Commerce and the

Secretary of the Treasury are both designated by the President, and that this is about the discretionary powers of the President. Why is the situation not important enough for the Prime Minister of this country to call the President of the United States personally and show him how important the matter is, not only for British Columbia but for the forestry sector across Canada?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think the response of the Prime Minister to the decision taken on the shakes and shingles matter a week and a half ago, as well as the representations to which I referred in my previous response, make very, very clear to the President, to the administration, and to Congress, the position this Government has taken. We are very concerned about the decision which is on the table right now and will be following it very closely. We have stated our position very clearly.

PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, does the Minister recognize that the over-reaction of the Prime Minister to the presidential decision on shakes and shingles is no substitute for proper action before the fact? It does not matter how loudly one slams the door after the horses have left the barn. Why will the Prime Minister not act before the decision is taken, before we get another excessive, bombastic reaction to a negative decision?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the rhetoric of the Leader of the Opposition will not fool anyone. People are very clear in this country, as well as in the United States, on the concern of this Government about the decision which is in the mill right now. We have made very clear the importance of the softwood lumber industry in Canada to the Province of British Columbia in particular. That has been conveyed very clearly to the United States. Its decision will be taken in full knowledge of the position which this Government is taking.

ATTENDANCE OF MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT AT WASHINGTON MEETING

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister. The Minister will know that because of the serious nature of the U.S. threat against Canada's softwood lumber industry, opposition MPs will welcome any opportunity to participate in meaningful meetings to formulate the defence of that industry. Yesterday's meeting in Washington was not meaningful; it was high farce. Why did the Government seek to use two ?PAGE 14004 opposition MPs and a Government MP as props for a Canadian media photo opportunity in Washington yesterday, rather than take constructive action to influence American public opinion and American political leaders about the grave nature of the U.S. threat against the Canadian softwood lumber industry?