

Oral Questions

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: Yes, there are, to this question. I repeat for my hon. friend that a decision which was raised in this House by the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans in the winter or early spring of the year was brought to the attention of some official of the PMO in July, and you suggest now, perhaps August. It was left that way. It was not brought to my attention. I have told my hon. friend that that is all I know about it. It was not conveyed to me. I will, however, be happy to look into the second part of that allegation and report to my hon. friend and the House, but there clearly was nothing improper of any kind at all.

An Hon. Member: Is Barbara next?

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BANKS AND BANKING**CANADIAN COMMERCIAL BANK—NON ATTENDANCE OF MINISTERS AT MARCH MEETING**

Miss Aileen Nicholson (Trinity): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Finance. Will the Minister confirm that neither she nor the Minister of Finance was present at the meetings of March 22 to March 25 when the fate of the Canadian Commercial Bank was being decided?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I think that is a matter of public record, that the discussions were carried on by persons other than myself.

MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Miss Aileen Nicholson (Trinity): Canada was facing its first bank failure in 60 years but two Ministers left the negotiations to officials and did not insist on full information about the bank's financial situation. How can the Minister justify the abdication of responsibility?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I can confirm for the Hon. Member that I have never in my life walked away from my responsibilities, not once.

● (1440)

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mrs. McDougall: It is perfectly normal—

Mr. Nystrom: You're next, Barbara.

Mrs. McDougall: It is perfectly normal practice for negotiations to be carried on by people who are constantly in touch. The Governor of the Bank of Canada, the Inspector General of Banks and the Deputy Minister of Finance acted perfectly appropriately. My colleague, the Minister of Finance, and I were fully informed and established the policy on which the negotiations were made.

ABSENCE OF CANADIAN REPRESENTATION

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister who will be well aware that the recent decision made over the weekend in the United States will result in enormous job losses for Canadians in all regions of the country. Since the Minister of Finance was in Washington prior to the meeting, knew of the meeting, and certainly would have known of the main item for discussion at the meeting, why did the Prime Minister not intervene and ensure that Canada was represented at that meeting?

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the G-Five meeting is a normal, routine meeting that takes place before the IMF meetings in the fall. Surely the Hon. Member is that well informed.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mrs. McDougall: The Minister of Finance has been in touch with Washington and has raised Canadian concerns with American officials. Many of those concerns were addressed by the action that was taken over the weekend.

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER INTERVENE

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is again addressed to the Prime Minister. It seems to me that Canada has taken the long-distance feeling on a number of issues, including the 300 American protectionist Bills and most recently this weekend's decision. Why do we not move away from the long-distance feeling with the United States and ask the Prime Minister to pick up the telephone, call the President of the United States and start representing the interests of Canadian workers and producers on an issue as important as this one?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would hope that within the next couple of days the Hon. Member will have occasion to rise to his feet to applaud the Government for continuing to do precisely that.

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YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT**REQUEST FOR AMENDING LEGISLATION**

Mr. Alan Redway (York East): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Solicitor General. He will know that recently an Ottawa judge dismissed a charge of escaping lawful custody against a juvenile who had walked away from detention in a group home. Will the Minister advise the House if he will be introducing, without delay, amendments to the Young Offenders Act to correct this situation and to correct all of the other problems that have been brought to his attention by the Chiefs of Police and the Attorneys General across the country?