

Oral Questions

various economic and social initiatives proposed by our Government in the recent throne speech. Considering the irreparable harm being done to our youth by drugs and alcohol, the people of Témiscamingue will be very pleased with our Government's intention to take effective measures against drug trafficking and to set up an action plan to deal with alcohol abuse. People in my riding will also certainly agree with my Government's plan to take effective action against child sexual abuse, child prostitution and violent forms of pornography.

I can assure my constituents that their Member will be taking very active interest in these initiatives and that he will fight diligently against these scourges of our society.

ORAL QUESTIONS

[Translation]

TRADE**FREE TRADE—GOVERNMENT POSITION**

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, in the Speech from the Throne, the Right Hon. Prime Minister made an about-face on free trade.

My question is directed to the Right Hon. Prime Minister. After heading off in the wrong direction, he doesn't know where he is going anymore. He has just abandoned the cornerstone of his policy. What is going to be left of his credibility?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there has been no about-face at all. The dialogue on trade is now under way with the United States. I believe five major meetings have already taken place. We are now entering a new phase and recently Ambassador Reisman expressed confidence in the ultimate outcome. As far as we are concerned, the Canadian Government remains convinced this is an important and welcome initiative for Canada.

[English]

LUMBER EXPORTS

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should never have allowed his Minister for International Trade to knuckle under to the Americans on lumber at the very time that the American tribunal was seized with the case. This morning the Americans are laughing at us because we conceded the case before it was decided. Why did the Prime Minister allow his Minister of International Trade to make such a naive offer to the Americans at this time?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, there was no knuckling under at all by the Minister of International Trade. If my right hon. friend wants to call Mr. Shultz, he will find out that that was the case.

An approach was put together by the provinces and supported by the labour unions. The Minister of International Trade, also a British Columbian, took this position to Washington and a lobby group rejected it. The ultimate answer will come in due course. As Premier Vander Zalm and Jack Munro indicated yesterday, I think we are all satisfied that the result will be a good one for British Columbia and Canada.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, unlike the Prime Minister, George Shultz may be my friend but he is not my boss.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

AUTOMOBILE AND STEEL INDUSTRIES

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Now that the Prime Minister has knuckled under to the Americans on lumber, what is next, the Auto Pact or steel? Will he assure the hundreds of thousands of Canadian auto workers and steel workers that he will not cave in to American interests in the same way as he did at the expense of our lumber workers across the country?

• (1120)

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, may I say with respect to the Right Hon. Member that, if George Shultz is not the leader's boss, he had better check with Keith Davey.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Mulroney: The trade negotiations are being conducted vigorously and we believe very well by Simon Reisman and his excellent team.

On the political side, I think the ability of the Minister for International Trade and her representations are well known to my right hon. friend. I am sure he will be satisfied that Canada's case, be it Canada's brief in steel or any other industry, will be extremely well defended by the Minister for International Trade who, I think he will recognize, did an enormous amount as Minister of Energy to correct serious problems in the energy field. She will be doing extremely good work in this area as well.

CANADIAN LUMBER OFFER

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade. Last Tuesday she made a final offer which she said the Americans could not refuse. The American industry has refused that offer. Now the British Columbia Premier and the Ministry of Forestry are saying that we must make another offer and have the negotiations continue.

What does the Canadian Government intend to do? Will it make another final offer, or will we return to the previous position and go before properly constituted trade tribunals to argue the merits of the case?