

Oral Questions

The actions of the Minister have resulted in less money being allocated, fewer people being given assistance, and the criteria for eligibility being tightened beyond any reasonable conditions. The consequence of these ill-advised actions is that people who would have received funding last year are now going to receive absolutely no funding whatsoever.

The Minister has quite simply abdicated his responsibilities and set those Canadians in need of housing assistance adrift with little or no hope of receiving much needed Government assistance. The conclusion one must draw from all this is that the Minister must be removed if he is not going to protect the interests of those who desperately need his help.

● (1415)

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS—VALUE OF
CANADIAN DOLLAR

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. It is no coincidence that today, at the outset of negotiations for free trade with the United States, the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury, James Baker, sent an ultimatum to Canada to raise the value of our dollar. Does the Prime Minister feel that the U.S. can continue to put this kind of economic pressure on our country as part of the price for free trade? Will he not make it clear that his Government is not going to be pushed around in order to keep these negotiations going?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, that is a preposterous point of view. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition knows full well that Secretary Baker delivered himself of a response to a question that was, as far as we are concerned, rather academic. We are members of the—

Mr. Waddell: It is always academic.

Mr. Mulroney: Absolutely. We are grateful for the rise, but it is quite academic because Canada, as the Minister explained, is a full partner in G-Seven now and we will work with all of our partners to strengthen our national and international economies.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The question is not academic at all. When the American negotiators start looking at our \$22 billion trade surplus with the U.S., they will look at the value of our dollar as part of the price. It is not academic at all.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT PRIME MINISTER TELEPHONE UNITED STATES
PRESIDENT

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the United States, which has been attacking our forestry workers, our farmers, our social programs, our cultural identity, has now launched an attack on the value of the dollar.

Will the Prime Minister finally decide to call up his friend, the President of the United States, and tell him he is going too far?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition is quick to turn into a demagogue. After all, the trade talks are only starting—

Mr. Malépart: And the Canadian Constitution!

Mr. Mulroney: If it isn't the constitutional expert from Montreal—Sainte-Marie again!

The trade talks are only getting started today. In fact, these negotiations will provide the basis for discussions between our two countries, in order to take a serious look at certain problems and deal with them. And that is what we are doing today: Ambassador Reisman for Canada and Ambassador Murphy for the Americans. There will be quite a few problems to discuss before the final settlement, and we will have to come to terms with certain realities. We are going to have a mature discussion about our various problems with a view to creating a national and international climate that will result in a new dimension of prosperity for Canada and new jobs for Canadians.

[English]

LUMBER EXPORTS TO UNITED STATES

Right Hon. John N. Turner (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has taken the position that the President of the United States has nothing to do with the current American attack on our lumber exports, this despite a clear letter from the President to Senator Packwood. Is the truth not revealed in that letter where the President promised to play tough with our lumber industry in order to get the free trade negotiations on the rails? Will the Prime Minister call his good friend President Reagan and say "Back off, back off on our lumber exports"?

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): There are too many Edward G. Robinson movies being watched over there.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: If the Americans—