

Oral Questions

tuna taken off the shelves in spite of the fact that it knew about it in advance?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, whether the question is hypothetical or not, I would be happy to respond to the thrust of the question of my hon. friend. As I understand it, the program aired on a Tuesday night. I did not see the program but it was brought to my attention that in fact it aired on that Tuesday night. Wednesday morning, I immediately charged the Deputy Minister with the responsibility of assembling all the details and immediately thereafter, the next day, the tuna was off the shelves. I think that that is very swift action on behalf of the people of Canada.

Mr. Nystrom: Government by television.

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TRADE

SHOE IMPORT QUOTAS

Mr. Sid Fraleigh (Lambton-Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade. There is presently a great deal of concern and uncertainty in the minds of the 20,000 Canadians who are employed in the shoe industry concerning the possible lifting of quotas on the importation of footwear into Canada. The industry wants to be assured of fair trade before free trade.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fraleigh: So that this uncertainty is removed, can the Minister tell the House when there will be a decision made regarding the industry's request for limited protection?

Hon. James Kelleher (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, as the Hon. Member is aware, the tribunal handed down its decision in the latter part of June. We were aware of that decision. We immediately consulted not only with the manufacturers and the unions but with the consumers, the importers and the exporters of shoes. We have heard from them. We are presently working on a response to that and will be reporting in due course to Cabinet.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACID RAIN—MODIFICATION OF SMELTERS

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, my question is addressed to the Minister of the Environment whom I wish well in his new portfolio. In view of the fact that last week at the conference in Muskoka on acid rain he indicated his wish to accelerate the process of modification of smelters in Canada, how does he intend to proceed with this?

• (1450)

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, may I begin my answer by thanking the Hon. Member for his congratulations and his good wishes. I look forward to working with him and his colleagues on our common environmental concerns.

To answer his specific question, my priority is to see, in concert with the provinces, that the provinces give effect to their individual commitments made on February 5 of this year to reduce acid rain-causing emissions by 1994 to 50 per cent of the levels prevalent in 1980. Only Quebec has come forward with a specific program to put into effect its own commitment. I am confident, however, that the other provinces will be following suit before long.

A federal-provincial conference is scheduled for next week, at which time I think each of the provinces will be eager to report to one another, and to me, on their respective progress.

MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Davenport): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister take a public stand, while the process which he has just announced proceeds, with respect to rejecting in no uncertain terms the request by the American Environmental Protection Agency for an additional three years of study in order to examine a request by the U.S. Judiciary which ordered the agency, in July, to proceed in the interest of Canadian and American forests and resources with respect to acid rain reductions? Will the Minister take a public stand in this regard?

Hon. Tom McMillan (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am a little puzzled by the question because I have done nothing else but take a public stand on the issue since becoming Minister.

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FINANCE

EXCHANGE VALUE OF UNITED STATES DOLLAR—MEETING OF FIVE FINANCE MINISTERS

Mr. Nelson A. Riis (Kamloops-Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. Yesterday the Minister of State for Finance said that to the best of her knowledge the weekend meeting in Washington to which Canada was not invited was just another routine meeting of Ministers of Finance of the Big Five. United States Treasury officials today said it could be called "a very special meeting conducted in utmost secrecy". Was the Minister of Finance aware of this special meeting? Was he aware of the important agenda items to be discussed at that meeting? Which of the Big Five was representing Canada's interests?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!