

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)):** Mr. Speaker, there is absolutely nothing new in this process. The Minister of Finance was in Washington very recently. He spoke with the Chief of Staff of the President; he spoke with Mr. Baker, and he spoke with Mr. Volcker. The concerns which were raised in the G-5 meeting yesterday have been part of our ongoing discussions with the United States for some time. The fact that Mr. Baker indicated that protectionism is a problem is one of the reasons that this Government has been very actively securing our access to the United States.

With regard to the first part of the question, what I believe the Deputy Prime Minister was attempting to answer, I think quite fairly, to my hon. friend was that when it came to my attention last Wednesday morning—and I was chairing caucus—I asked the Deputy Prime Minister to begin immediately a series of meetings with the Minister of Fisheries and his officials to ensure that the matter was properly and effectively handled. The Minister of Fisheries met with the Deputy Prime Minister beginning in caucus itself. I think that should satisfy any concerns my hon. friend has.

CANADA-UNITED STATES TRADE—REQUEST FOR  
PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, obviously we cannot get much sense out of the Minister. Perhaps I could direct my supplementary question to the Prime Minister. When we consider the importance of the devaluation of the American dollar to our trading position, would the Prime Minister now agree that he should hold off on taking any major trade initiative with the United States until we have an opportunity to assess the impact of this action upon our trading position? Does he not also agree that it is time for a major parliamentary debate on what that trading initiative should be?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think we have invited parliamentary debate and parliamentary opinion. We have taken the initiative of striking a parliamentary committee, of which I believe the Hon. Member is a member. It toured the country. We invited criticism, expressions of concern and constructive advice with regard to how we secure better access to our major markets. I think everything we have done is consistent with this degree of openness and searching for advice, counsel and criticism, because all of the country must be involved in this process.

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## FISHERIES

## SALE OF CANNED TUNA—MINISTER'S RESIGNATION

**Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Last Friday the Prime Minister indicated that as soon as he heard of the tuna scandal he acted immediately and removed the product from the shelves. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans absolutely contradicted the Prime Minister within two hours on Friday. Would the Prime Minister indicate or admit to the House that he fired the Minister of Fisheries because he challenged his veracity and his integrity, not because of the serious, major error which the Minister of Fisheries made?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, in response to the last part of my hon. friend's observation, in conversation with me this weekend the Minister of Fisheries, given the reasons which he explains in his correspondence, offered his resignation as Minister, and I accepted it today.

## PRIME MINISTER'S KNOWLEDGE OF MATTER

**Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister's office was warned on July 28. It was warned again on August 13, DND was involved in removing tuna, at the Minister's awareness. The labs of the Minister of National Health and Welfare were involved in checking the product weeks ago. Can the Prime Minister say, truthfully, that he knew nothing about this before the date upon which he acted on it? If that is the case, what is going on inside the Government when a serious error such as this can escape the attention of the Prime Minister, when his office has been warned twice and at least two of his Ministers have been involved in the same problem?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I can tell my hon. friend that I was first alerted to this on the Tuesday night with a call with regard to a news item which appeared that evening. I read it for the first time on Wednesday morning in the press. I immediately instructed the Deputy Prime Minister, given the schedule I had, to begin a series of meetings with the Minister and appropriate officials so that the matter would be resolved. It is a fact, I am now informed, that an official from the Fisheries Department consulted with an official from my office in July with regard to an item which might appear on a television network. It apparently did not appear, and it was never brought to my attention.

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## FINANCE

EXCHANGE VALUE OF UNITED STATES DOLLAR—GOVERNMENT  
POSITION

**Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West):** Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. The Minister of State for Finance has just said that prior to the meeting on Sunday, which involved the United States and four other countries but not Canada, the major trading partner of the United States, the Minister of Finance met with the Chief of Staff of the President and the Governor of the U.S. Federal Reserve Board to be briefed on the situation. Obviously the Prime Minister and his Government knew about the decision to devalue the American dollar before it happened. Why are the Prime Minister and his Government so supinely accepting a decision which can cause untold damage to Canadian producers,