

*Oral Questions*

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I will take the last part of the Hon. Member's question first. That view was put forward many times and accepted by the President of the United States which is why, as my hon. friend will no doubt acknowledge, the President of the United States said in late March that, as far as his administration was concerned, any talks with Canada would begin without conditions precedent and as a free and clear launch.

With regard to the other question raised by the Hon. Member, for the moment this is an internal American matter. Our position has been made abundantly clear. We will not trade lumber, potatoes or fish against any advantage to secure a vote tomorrow. We are a sovereign nation, and not a bunch of mendicants as the NDP would suggest.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor):** Mr. Speaker, we have never made a suggestion of that kind. We have suggested the contrary.

My supplementary question is the following. If we face such a crucial potential vote in the Senate, as we clearly do, why has the Prime Minister not seen fit to get in touch with his American friend, President Reagan, to discuss this issue and to try to reach some conclusion which will satisfy Canadians and avoid concessions which the President himself seems to be talking about, according to reports?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has this thing backwards. Our responsibility is to deal with the administration of the United States which was elected by the people of the United States. That is the one that is in place. We have dealt with it. Beginning on September 26, in this House, we received a response on behalf of the administration by the President of the United States in which he enthusiastically endorsed the notion of negotiations between our two peoples without preconditions, without conditions precedent of any kind—a clean launch. That is clear. That is our responsibility.

It now falls into the domain of the United States and its internal parliamentary system for the President of the United States to secure the appropriate approvals of congressional committees. He is charged, under the Constitution and by custom, with doing that, and that is his responsibility. The administration has responded. We have responded. Now we will see if the United States Senate or members thereof view this trade matter with the same degree of importance as we do.

● (1425)

## COMMUNICATIONS WITH U.S. ADMINISTRATION

**Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor):** Mr. Speaker, surely the Prime Minister cannot simply sit back and let this process go on as if it were some kind of merry-go-round that is

unimportant to him, given his commitment to this policy in the past. Why has he not communicated directly with the American administration and made it very clear that concessions that will harm this country cannot be given? Why has there been no direct communication at such a crucial time?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, a shadow must have a very difficult time in a fight with my hon. friend. The fact of the matter is that we are not sitting back. We have not done anything that we view as unimportant. We have already made the case. That case was accepted by the President of the United States and the Secretary—

**Mr. Orlikow:** But not by the Congress.

**Mr. Mulroney:** If my hon. friend from Winnipeg would allow me to finish, I would be happy to try. Our obligation is not to form a queue in Senators' offices. Members of the NDP are used to that but we will not do that. We are a sovereign nation. We made a deal with the President of the United States and we expect the United States to live up to it.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

## CANADIAN EMBASSY ACTIONS

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, I too would like to ask a question of the Prime Minister who has just given his own interesting version of the way the U.S. Constitution works. Does the Prime Minister now say that no Canadian officials representing our Government at the Embassy in Washington are to make contact with U.S. Senators or Congressmen? Has he given explicit orders that should be no contact whatsoever between embassy officials and officials of the Congress? Is that what the Prime Minister is now saying?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I doubt if you would see a more blatant illustration of distortion and dishonesty than that which has been put forward. I said no such thing. I said that I had not spoken to the President of the United States, but I did not in any way utter any of the distortions mentioned by my hon. friend.

## DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry):** Mr. Speaker, I think the Prime Minister has just added a second distortion to his first one. In response to previous questions he said that he did not see any interference by this Government in the affairs of the United States Government. Does that statement that he made in answer to the Leader of the Official Opposition and the New Democratic Party spokesman mean that there has been no contact whatsoever by Canadian officials or embassy representatives with Members of Congress, or has he once again contradicted himself like he does on a daily basis?