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TRADE MINISTER MAKES ANNOUNCEMENT ON STEEL

The Minister for International Trade, the Honourable James Kelleher, issued the following statement today after a meeting in Ottawa with senior executives of the Canadian steel industry, and union and provincial representatives:

"We are encouraged by indications that there is no longer a threat of trade restrictive action by the United States affecting Canadian steel trade interests. This was confirmed yesterday in the course of meetings in Washington between Prime Minister Mulroney and President Reagan and between Finance Minister Wilson and U.S. Treasury Secretary Regan.

Participants in today's meeting all share a common objective, namely to retain access to the U.S. market and preserve jobs for Canadian steelworkers. We also share a concern that Canada not become a dumping ground for foreign steel or a diversion route for offshore steel destined for the U.S. market.

We noted the desire of labour to protect jobs in the North American steel industry, as reflected in a resolution passed at the U.S.W. convention in Cleveland yesterday. If there are concerns about how this can best be achieved, they will be addressed in a meeting next week between Canadian industry and labour representatives.

The Canadian government continues to oppose the imposition of any measures at the border which would interfere with the mutually beneficial two-way trade in steel."