

agreement on lumber that satisfies only the interests of the United States of America?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, if there is one thing that is abundantly clear about the approach that this Government has taken to trade negotiations with the United States it is that we have insisted that, if they begin, they begin without preconditions. That has been our position consistently. It is our position today.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

TREATY RIGHTS OF INDIANS IN NORTHEASTERN ALBERTA

Mr. Jack Shields (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. The Minister will know that the enhancement program on fishing lakes in northeastern Alberta that was launched by the Alberta Government conflicts directly with the treaty rights of Indians in northeastern Alberta. What is the Minister doing about it?

Hon. David Crombie (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, it is a matter that has been brought to my attention. Since it involves treaty rights, I am sure the Hon. Member and other Hon. Members are aware that it is a complicated matter. The Department has it under review.

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NATIONAL REVENUE

INFORMATION GIVEN BY OFFICIALS TO TAXPAYERS

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Revenue. Today the Minister outlined the measures that will assist staff in giving the right answers to Canadian taxpayers in the future. What measures has he taken to assist taxpayers in the eight days remaining to file income tax returns, since we learned a few weeks ago that 40 per cent of the answers to the questions addressed to Revenue Canada were wrong?

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I think the Hon. Member knows that this matter has been dealt with by commentators and that I have answered questions in the House and outside the House.

We regret the situation where performance appears to be lacking somewhat. However, upon analysis it may well be that the performance is not as bad as was first indicated. In any event, as the Hon. Member knows, I have outlined some measures that we are taking to correct the situation. I can assure him that the staff has been interviewed and during these

last few days we will attempt to be more diligent and more forthcoming with the answers we are giving to the public.

[Translation]

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT NOT SEEK INTEREST PAYMENTS
ON TAX RETURN MISTAKES CAUSED BY PROVISION OF
INCORRECT INFORMATION

Mr. Alfonso Gagliano (Saint-Léonard—Anjou): Mr. Speaker, will the Minister direct his officials not to seek interest payments on tax return errors caused by misleading information provided by Revenue Canada and identified as such by the *Toronto Star*?

[English]

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, I think it is well known that it is the policy of the Department to make redress whenever possible if it can be shown that we are in any way responsible for misinformation.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

AFGHANISTAN—UNITED NATIONS INITIATIVE

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs who gave an encouraging answer to the question posed by the Hon. Member for York West regarding certain Soviet defectors and the improved readiness of Canada to accept them. My question is essentially a supplementary, with a view to addressing the underlying problem of the conflict in Afghanistan. Does the Canadian Government support the United Nations initiative and proposal that were presented last week to Afghanistan and Pakistan regarding the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we have supported those talks and those United Nations efforts throughout. We intend to continue to support them. Naturally, we intend to look for any other ways, if any can be found, whereby Canada might supplement the excellent initiatives taken by the Secretary General.

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IMMIGRATION

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS OF PROSPECTIVE IMMIGRANTS

Mr. George Baker (Gander—Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The Government of Canada is conducting a cost justification study of doctors whose job it is to "ensure that prospective immigrants to Canada pose neither a medical threat to present citizens nor a financial burden to Canadian health services". Will the Minister confirm that the doctors