

Oral Questions

Question Period. They want to get their point of view on the record. Putting a bill in is one way of doing that, not unlike a private member's bill. I think my hon. friend is aware that if there is an attempt by U.S. legislation to inhibit the capacity or the ability of companies to enter the U.S. market that is contrary to the free trade agreement, we will fight it very, very hard.

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CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Yesterday, during discussions that the Leader of the Opposition had with the Secretary-General and other senior officials of the United Nations, several matters of concern to Canada came up, one of them specifically dealing with children. Close to 50 countries, many of them very poor countries, have already completed and finalized their national plans of action and are in fact implementing them. Canada is not one of them.

I want to ask the minister why has Canada, which co-chaired the summit on children, been so neglectful in living up to its commitments of that summit? When will this government start leading instead of following in dealing with the plight of children in Canada and the world?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, before Christmas we said we would sign the convention for children and we did, as was said by the Prime Minister. I said at the time that a plan would be presented some time in March, after consultation with the provinces. We in Canada once in a while have to consult the provinces. We do and we did. I believe that I can live up to what I said in terms of March. The plan of action for children should be presented to the House in the middle of March.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): I hope the minister is faster on this than he was on the question of breast implants on which we are still waiting for a proper decision.

[Translation]

HAITI

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question on another humanitarian problem. There is a tragedy in Haiti. Thousands of refugees are being forcibly repatriated to misery and oppression. Canada, as a member of the OAS, has a special obligation to these refugees.

What concrete action will the government take to help these people? What representations is it making to the American government to come up with a more humane solution?

• (1450)

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the best solution for the refugees is to continue to work on improving policies within Haiti. Canada has played an important and significant role with other OAS members and the eight nations that visited Haiti to look into the situation. I often discuss it with the other ministers of foreign affairs and with people in Washington.

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[English]

MOTOR VEHICLE SAFETY STANDARDS

Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport.

In the *Canada Gazette* of December 21 regarding amendments to the Motor Vehicle Safety Act there was a paragraph that reads:

The amendments do not require vehicles manufactured to United States and California emission standards to comply with Canadian emission levels. There are other areas of double standards in the Motor Vehicle Safety Act regarding notice of defect regulations and also the metric calibration regulations.

As the free trade agreement is phased in, these really hurt the Canadian industry. Will the minister move to either lower the Canadian standards to the U.S. standards or require that American vehicles meet our standards?

Hon. Jean Corbeil (Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member will certainly recognize that the numerous issues that he has raised in his question cannot be answered on the floor of the House. I know that one of his main concerns is related to odometers. One of the suggestions he has put forward would require the open-