

[Translation]

DANGEROUS PRODUCTS

INQUIRY WHETHER MINISTER MADE STUDY INTO DANGERS OF STEEL WOOL

Miss Aideen Nicholson (Trinity): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. In light of the publication of European studies which reveal that steel wool might be just as hazardous as asbestos, would the minister tell the House whether his department has made a study on that subject?

Hon. André Ouellet (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for her question. I can assure her that the officials of my department are now examining that question and that I will report to the hon. member as soon as possible.

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[English]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

GOVERNMENT POSITION ON CANADA-UNITED STATES WEST COAST BOUNDARY DISPUTE

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Secretary of State for External Affairs. It concerns the boundary negotiations on the AB line on the northern coast of British Columbia. One of the senior officials of his department is quoted as saying, "I see no relationship between the salmon talks and the boundary negotiations with the U.S. The Canadian government is not willing to jeopardize its trade agreements with the U.S. over a boundary dispute". Would the minister confirm that this is the position of the Canadian government on that particular boundary dispute?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, I can confirm that that is not our position. The position of our government is consistently that each issue must be taken on its own merit. We do not engage in bargaining one issue against another. It is for this reason, indeed, that we have been taking great exception to some of the proposals made recently in the United States whereby they would propose actions of that kind. Whoever made that statement is not enunciating government policy; quite the contrary.

QUERY RESPECTING MAINTENANCE OF BOUNDARY

Mr. Benno Friesen (Surrey-White Rock-North Delta): Madam Speaker, my supplementary is to the same minister. Will he confirm that Canada's position is to maintain an historic boundary line which has existed now for 80 years?

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, when the hon. member puts his question in those terms I do not know whether he means to exclude additional claims which we might have. We are certainly not contemplating abandoning any of our traditional

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claims, but we do not necessarily limit ourselves to traditional claims.

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ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

DISCUSSIONS WITH UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ON ACID RAIN

Hon. George Hees (Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment and Minister of State for Science and Technology. Would the minister advise the House what progress was made at his meeting with his American counterpart in Washington last Wednesday which dealt with our mutual problem of acid rain? Specifically, did the American government make a commitment to equal the commitment of the Canadian government to cut down emissions which cause acid rain by 50 per cent by the year 1990?

Hon. John Roberts (Minister of the Environment and Minister of State for Science and Technology): Madam Speaker, meetings did take place last week between the two negotiating teams of Canada and the United States on the acid rain question. These are difficult negotiations. They are proving to be difficult. We did have the opportunity at that meeting to put forward our proposals which, after consultation with the provinces, are that we are prepared to see that sulphur dioxide emissions in Canada are reduced by 50 per cent by the year 1990. These are contingent upon American action in meeting similar reductions. The proposals which we have presented are being assessed and studied by the American administration. There is some progress in the sense that the American government will be appointing scientific assessors before the end of the month to review the scientific evidence.

An hon. Member: Why not just say no.

Mr. Roberts: That is a step forward. Negotiations will continue and I expect that we will meet another three times before the end of this year. That is the extent of the progress to date.

PROMISE MADE BY PRESIDENT OF UNITED STATES

Hon. George Hees (Northumberland): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Prime Minister. In view of the minister's answer and the fact that the United States Department of the Environment has cut back its number of employees by 40 per cent since the first of the year, thereby indicating a far lower level of activity in attempting to control the environment from now on, both of which indicate that the U.S. government is very badly dragging its feet in this matter, would the Prime Minister tell the House how does the stand of the American government at the present time, as displayed by the minister's answer, and the facts which I just brought out, compare with the very warm, fulsome promise by the President of the United States, Mr. Reagan, when he was