

*Oral Questions*

301 of the U.S. trade act and harm, at a very desperate time, the Canadian softwood lumber industry?

In the interest of all the information that the Prime Minister says he wants, will he tell the House and tell the people of Canada?

**Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I heard my hon. friend. I have already indicated to him that I conveyed to the President of the United States our view and our position, that the MOU was going to be terminated because, in our judgment, all of the conditions in regard to it had been fulfilled and it would be unfair and unacceptable for the Canadian industry to further sustain any of these burdens.

• (1450 )

That was a decision of the Government of Canada. We executed that decision as we said we would. The President of the United States is responsible for the decisions of his administration and I am sure he will take whatever—

**Mr. Harvard:** No commitment.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Speaker:** I am sure all hon. members know that we do the best we can during a 45-minute period to get as many members on their feet as possible. It makes it more difficult for the Chair when answers are interrupted by even good-natured heckling because of course it brings about a further response which extends time. I am sure hon. members will keep that in mind.

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**THE CONSTITUTION**

**Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs.

Yesterday the leader of the Assembly of First Nations said there would be a one-month boycott by his organization of the national unity debate, with a request that the government come back with a proposal that is more acceptable to the assembly on aboriginal issues.

In light of the importance of a resolution of aboriginal concerns to the success of the package on constitutional issues, I want to ask the minister whether or not he is in a position today to announce that, first, there will be a

substantive change on aboriginal issues pertaining to self-government, and second, a shortening of the 10-year time limit for the resolution of the aboriginal self-government issue.

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada put forward a very serious proposal, going farther than any government has before with regard to self-government for aboriginal people.

I will be very happy to have that proposal discussed before the special joint committee, and improved if possible. The Assembly of First Nations, through its national chief, has a different view, insisting upon the reference to the words "inherent rights." I believe it is in the interests of all of us if the Assembly of First Nations will bring their position to the committee directly, and the national chief come and make his case. My recommendation to him, for what that is worth to him, is that it would be better for him to do that sooner rather than later.

**Mr. Robert E. Skelly (Comox—Alberni):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the same minister.

The rejection of an inherent right to self-government resulted in the failure of the first ministers' process on aboriginal self-government four years ago. The refusal to deal with aboriginal issues in the Meech Lake Accord resulted in the rejection of that accord last year.

Is the minister willing to risk another failure in the current round of constitutional proposals by refusing to consider aboriginal self-government as an inherent right?

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister Responsible for Constitutional Affairs):** I am in a non-partisan mode, Mr. Speaker, so let me simply say that my recollection of events differs from that of my hon. friend.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that proposals should not be changed before they are discussed. We have a proposal before a special joint committee of this House of Commons and the Senate. It is a place where discussion can occur. I would hope that the Assembly of First Nations, along with the Metis National Council, the Inuit Tapirisat, other aboriginal organizations, and all other interested Canadians will come to the committee