

Oral Questions

Will the Prime Minister tell us today how, since September, 1990, CIDA policy changes demonstrate increased and additional resource commitment to the world's children?

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I would ask my hon. friend, in the interests of the House being able to take a look at it, to table the data to which she referred. We will take a careful look at it.

It would be very surprising, Mr. Speaker, inasmuch as the United Nations has just surveyed 160 nations in the world and found that on an objective set of criteria pursuant to the human condition, education, and that involves children, Canada is the second best place in the entire world to live. That repudiates very eloquently those facts and figures.

Mr. Speaker, we have taken a very important lead in regard to the protection of children. We have a long way to go. But in regard to the implementation of the convention of the United Nations, we are asking all of the provinces to make sure that their laws are in keeping with this so that we can ratify it, as I indicated to the United Nations, by the end of 1991.

But I do not think that anyone is helped, least of all the children of Canada to whom we owe so much, by stating misleading information like that.

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TRADE

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. I want to indulge the Prime Minister's need for ensuring that the people of Canada have full and complete information.

In his supplementary question, the Leader of the Opposition asked the Prime Minister whether or not the Prime Minister had discussed with the President of the United States a threatened retaliation by the United States to impose a new 15 per cent import tax on Canadian softwood lumber.

The Prime Minister knows that the Canadian export tax is being lifted within a matter of days. He knows that industry and government sources in the U.S. have threatened a new U.S. tax. He knows that that power lies

in the hands of the President of the United States through Article 301.

The Prime Minister has spoken to the President. Has he received an assurance that Article 301 will not be invoked and that there will be no new import tax imposed on Canadian softwood lumber going to the United States?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I think I answered that question. Let me try again and maybe the hon. member will take in the answer.

We have had extensive discussions with the United States; the Prime Minister with the President and myself with other members of the administration, as well as officials in the United States government.

We have a range of options on the table which are being pressed by various interests in the United States. My hon. friend is very well aware, I am sure, that the industry and some members of Congress have been pretty exercised by the action we have taken to establish the trade in softwood lumber on a normal basis, not subject to these rules where we have to go to Washington and knock on their door and ask for permission to change.

There are options on the table, some of which include a 301; but it is our best judgment—and as I said in my earlier answer there are no guarantees on this—there will not be a 301 action, that we will deal with this in other forms and ways that will put the trade in softwood lumber back on track.

Mr. Brian Tobin (Humber—St. Barbe—Baie Verte): Mr. Speaker, I direct my supplementary question to the Prime Minister.

Prime Minister, we do not want the judgment of the minister; we want to know, Prime Minister, from you—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member will put his question.

Mr. Tobin: The Prime Minister knows that only the President, not Congress, not the U.S. industry, not interested members of the public, but only the President can invoke Article 301. Has the President assured the Prime Minister that the President will not invoke Article