

Customs Tariff

Commercial Bank, a sin which hangs solely on their backs, I might add. However, I want to tell the Hon. Member that in fact the reduction in steel exported to the United States has occurred as a direct result of this Government's refusal to act and its refusal to say to the United States Congress as well as to the President of the United States that we are, we have been and we will continue to be fair trading partners. For the Prime Minister to suggest that this somehow—

Mr. Brisco: Hogwash.

Ms. Copps: Hogwash? You don't feel we are fair trading partners? If the Hon. Member does not believe that the Canadian steel industry has been a fair trading party I would urge him to stand in his place and correct the record because he will find from every major steel industry, from Hamilton, from Sault Ste. Marie, from Cape Breton Island and across the country that Canada has constantly been pointed out as one trading partner which has been fair with the United States. We are not dumping our steel. We are selling our steel productively in the United States on a competitive basis, more competitive than any other nation in the world.

If the Hon. Member has information to show otherwise I would suggest that he have the guts to table it in the House. He does not have the guts because he knows that the Canadian steel industry has been competitive.

What has been our thanks for that from the U.S. Congress? What has been our thanks from the U.S. Government? A further reduction in Canadian exports to the United States and a cut into the market share which is further exacerbated and if continued, if accelerated, could lead to the loss of almost 6,000 Canadian jobs in the steel industry. Contrast that with a Prime Minister who goes to the President on bended knee and says, "Please, Mr. President, will you join us with fair trading and free trading practices in other arenas? Will you, in fact, be prepared to consider discussing with us free trade in a number of other sectors untouched, for example, by auto industry and steel industry fair trading practices? Will you, Mr. President, consent to speak with us on these issues?"

The Prime Minister of Canada has sold out his deck before he has even played his first card on the free trade issue. I would suggest if anyone wants to do an analysis—

Mr. Brisco: Garbage.

Ms. Copps: Garbage. The Hon. Member again says garbage and I wish I could identify the Hon. Member, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Brisco: Your memory isn't long enough.

Ms. Copps: My memory isn't long enough? It is unfortunate that we do not hear much from a lot of the Government Members, 211 though they may be. I have not heard from them on the family allowances debate. I have not heard from them on the Customs and Excise debate. I have not heard from them on the free trade debate although we did see one Hon. Member stand up and speak his piece very eloquently during Question Period today. The reason we do not hear from

most of them, Mr. Speaker, is because just like the surfers they came in with the tide, they are here to collect a pay cheque and they are not fighting for the interests of their constituents over and above political considerations. I would suggest that is true of some of those Members with the exception, of course, of the Fisheries Minister who had the guts to tell the truth in the House of Commons, and we saw where that got him. He got sacked. He got axed. He got dumped. He got canned by the Prime Minister because he had the guts to tell the truth on who was responsible for the tuna scandal. But what do we hear from the other Members? Silence, abject defeat, dejection. They are not prepared to stand up to the Prime Minister when they know these series of events were not stated quite correctly in the House.

Mr. Speaker, back to the issue at hand. If the Hon. Members on the Government side of the House has facts which can dispute my analysis of the steel situation he should so inform this House. The Prime Minister signed a handwritten letter which went to every constituent in my riding saying, "Don't vote for me, vote for your Conservative candidate because your Conservative candidate is going to be there fighting for steel jobs with me". The proof of the pudding is in the eating. Since he has become the Prime Minister, the percentage of the Canadian market share of sales to the United States for the steel industry has dropped by almost 10 per cent. Why should we take the word of the Prime Minister on free trade negotiations when he cannot even clean up the mess that is being made in his own backyard with respect to the protectionist tendencies in the United States?

• (1600)

The record is clear. The reduction in the market share that Canadians now hold in the U.S. steel industry should be a flag cautioning those Members, and in particular the Prime Minister, who are willing to barrel hohol-bolus into a global negotiated free trade agreement without considering who is going to be on the giving end and who is going to be on the receiving end. The question must be one of a far wider, global nature.

What happened to our initiatives in the Far East? What happened to Pacific Rim discussions? What happened to a global trade enhancement that would not pit Canada and the United States against the rest of the world when it comes to certain protectionist measures but would develop a long-term global economy that would allow every economy to compete on an equal footing? Instead, the Prime Minister of Canada, through his office, is attempting to downplay the genuine concerns of Canadians like Premier David Peterson of Ontario. I might add that the number of such Canadians is growing. The more people examine the specific implications of an expanded negotiated free trade agreement with the United States, the more concerns they have.

A valid request of the Prime Minister and Members on the Government side is to table the information. We do not want the Canadian public hoodwinked by communications strategies which talk about undermining legitimate Opposition Members. We do not want the Canadian public steamrollered into