

Government Orders

With respect to amendment 6, I must first say that we subscribe to some of the principles underlying the amendment itself. However, we believe that certain provisions of this amendment will make the World Trade Organization's decision-making process much more cumbersome.

• (1205)

Consequently, we have some difficulty supporting this amendment. We agree particularly on the principle that the changes to be made to provincial legislation must be considered, along with the provincial areas of jurisdiction affected by implementing the Uruguay Round agreement.

I would like to point out to my colleague that we presented an amendment which will require the government to take into account the provisions concerning provincial areas of jurisdiction. So I respectfully invite him to support our amendment instead of his, because his amendment will make the World Trade Organization's decision-making process considerably more cumbersome, as I said earlier.

As for amendment 7, requiring the minister to report twice a year on the state of negotiations on the labour, social and environmental aspects of trade relations, we agree on this principle, of course. However, I repeat that we proposed an amendment which addresses this concern. I regret to inform the hon. member that, during the work of the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, our colleagues on the government side were not very receptive to the idea of having only one annual report on the implementation of the Uruguay Round agreements by our main partners, particularly the United States.

I see that the amendment moved by the hon. member of the New Democratic Party, which suggests not only one report but two of them, has even less chance of being approved by members on the government side. Consequently, I would invite him, so that we can be sure that this point will be accepted, to support our amendment, which seeks only one report every year.

Before I go any further, may I draw your attention to the fact that, once again, we do have not a quorum. On the government side, we only have the parliamentary secretary to the Minister of International Trade. So, Madam Speaker, I would ask you to rule on the quorum.

And the count having been taken:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): Since we have a quorum, the hon. member may continue.

Mr. Bergeron: Madam Speaker, I am impressed with how diligently you have applied the Standing Orders.

I am surprised to hear our colleagues from the Reform Party constantly repeat that we should have Bill C-57 adopted as soon as possible in order for the Uruguay Round Agreement to be implemented at the earliest possible time. I think nothing should

stand in our moving as quickly as we can, even though obvious and significant improvements must be made to the bill tabled.

My colleague, the hon. member for Regina—Lumsden, is concerned with the expectations of the steel industry. I can assure him that today's Order Paper also contains an amendment which will likely meet these expectations.

I mentioned earlier that we intended to oppose amendments Nos. 6 and 7, mainly because we wanted to submit concurrent or similar ones which, according to us, would be simpler and easier to implement. With your permission, I will go back to these amendments.

• (1210)

I think our colleague, the hon. member for Laval East, did very well in introducing her amendment. I shall not elaborate further on that one.

However, I would like to add a few comments on the amendment also brilliantly introduced by my colleague from Longueuil. The hon. member for Louis-Hébert mentioned a few things with regard to these two amendments and I would like to shed new information on the subject.

I would like to remind the hon. members in this House that the purpose of the amendment was that Parliament be informed each year about the implementation of the Agreement in Canada, the fulfilment of our international obligations and the impact of the Agreement on Canadian and Quebec workers, according to priorities previously set by the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

It must be understood that the Uruguay Round Agreement is anything but a simple agreement between technocrats. It is the result of eight years of very complex negotiations which meant that the various participating governments and States had to make a number of political choices.

The effects of this Agreement are numerous and they affect a great many different areas. The Americans are ready, and we see this in the bill that is now before Congress—to challenge our tariff measures and compare them with the provisions of the international treaties we have signed, and I am referring to the Uruguay Round agreement and NAFTA. They have set up a consultation process to collect information that will be used to challenge our measures, for instance. We must be prepared. We must have the information we need to prepare on defence. In this respect, I note that section 424 of the U.S. bill to implement the Uruguay Round agreement reads as follows:

[*English*]

“The President, not later than six months after the date of entering into force of the WTO agreement with respect to the United States, shall submit a report to the Congress on the extent to which Canada is complying with its obligation under the Uruguay round agreement with respect to dairy and poultry