

Customs Tariff

The matter will probably not stop at Mexico. When I visited El Salvador in May, I asked the vice-minister of planning what he was doing about unemployment there. The lowest rate of unemployment which the Government estimates there is 50 per cent of the workforce. He speaks very good English and told me: "We want you Canadians to invest in our cheap labour". He obviously was not talking to the garment workers in Spadina or the auto workers in any of the Canadian auto manufacturing locations.

He thought he was talking to a well-to-do Member of Parliament, perhaps a colleague of another Member of Parliament who has often visited El Salvador because of his interest in shoe factories there. He invited me and my friends to invest in their cheap labour. He is not kidding that it is cheap labour. According to the *Star*, it is \$4 a day for labour. Those who attempt to organize unions are shot, and those who complain about the shootings are shot as well. The Government has never brought any of those murderers to justice. It is the death squads in places like El Salvador and it is corporations like Adidas and General Motors which I fear in Clause 15 and against which I believe the amendment of the Member for Ottawa Centre is very reasonable.

The Prime Minister sneers at those who oppose the deal that he is writing with the President. I heard him in Toronto on Friday sneer at those who compare the deal to sleeping with an elephant. However, the Prime Minister himself said four years ago that free trade with the United States is like sleeping with an elephant, it is terrific until the elephant twitches, and if it ever rolls over you are dead. It is a sad day when the Prime Minister of Canada sneers at what he himself said when he was running for the leadership of the Party that now governs the country.

Mr. John Parry (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to address the reasoned amendment put forward by the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy) to the horribly permissive clause which the Government has inserted in this Bill.

Whenever we read a clause that says the Governor in Council may make regulations deeming goods, the whole or a portion of the value of which is produced outside a country, to originate in that country for the purposes of this Act, I think we have a right, indeed a duty, to be suspicious. This clause flies in the face of reason, in the face of geography, and in the face of history. It is an Alice in Wonderland situation whereby the Government abrogates to itself this right to say that things are not in fact the way things actually are. Surely that is not the purpose of legislation within a democratic society that believes in the rule of law.

We should not give the Government the power to make a deeming decision that is on the level of saying that night should be day, black should be white, or up should be down. However, that is the import of the permissive legislation the Government is bringing forward in this instance.

We are discussing the trading relationships of the United States and Mexico that would be implied in the application of the free trade agreement which the Government believes it has signed with the United States.

This amendment is not directed toward Mexico supplying certain assembled goods to the American economy, nor is it aimed at Mexico selling these assembled goods into the Canadian market. I believe we have had a history of allowing access to our markets for manufactured goods generally and a history of at least showing some openness toward the products of the Third World.

Frankly, however, such a policy has been rather by way of indifference than policy. Canadians should be looking much more carefully at this record in terms of the interest we should take toward the economic development of the Third World and the use of our markets and buying power to promote that economic development while ensuring the survival of a healthy and strong Canadian economy.

We are not opposed to entering into a direct trading relationship with Mexico. Indeed, we should actively promote such a program to act as a counterbalance to the excessive dependence on the United States markets for our raw materials and semi-manufactured goods. However, the power conferred upon the Government by Clause 15 would essentially allow the Canadian Government, at the behest of the U.S. Government, of course, to allow Mexican goods produced in the free trade zone, known as the Maquiladora zone, to be imported into Canada as American goods.

Clause 15 would essentially endow the Government with the power to delegate to the Americans a sovereign power of government that has not previously been given away. This would, in effect, provide a back-door for entry into the Canadian market of goods that are produced at Third World wages, at Third World working conditions, with Third World levels of virtually non-existent benefits and safeguards for health and work safety.

● (1240)

The problems caused North America, particularly the United States, by the weakness of the economic system of Mexico, are problems that should be addressed as such and not in a proxy fashion. Canada, after all, permits the less developed countries to have their goods enter Canada free of tariffs, although there are some quotas. That, however, is a direct relationship, and those direct relationships, I believe, should be a prime preoccupation of the Canadian Government, because I believe they are worth expanding and that Canada can improve its assistance to economic development in the Third World by so doing.

As the Hon. Member for Trinity (Miss Nicholson) pointed out, why would the Government want this excessive deeming power unless, frankly, it is to satisfy the demands of the multinational corporations and major national corporations, or