

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, March 17, 1986

The House met at 11 a.m.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: I would like to inform Hon. Members that the noise coming through the interpretation system is being investigated.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION

INTERIM REPORT OF CANADIAN SECTION OF CANADA-U.S.
INTERPARLIAMENTARY GROUP

Mr. Pat Nowlan (Annapolis Valley-Hants): Pursuant to Standing Order 101, I have the honour, as co-chairman of the Canadian delegation, to table in the House in both official languages, the interim report of the Canadian section of the Canada-U.S. Interparliamentary Group, which met in Tucson, Arizona, from February 27 to March 3, 1986.

The report summarizes the discussion in the plenary meeting of the two delegations which was devoted to the subject of enhanced trade with the United States. As Members are doubtless aware, Congress presently holds the key as to whether or not President Reagan will be granted authority to negotiate such an agreement with Canada. The U.S. Trade Act establishes a rather complicated procedure. If, within 60 working days, Congress does not explicitly act to deny the President such authority, negotiations between the two countries may commence. The 60-day period expires about mid-April, so our meeting was held at a critical phase of the Congressional review. Adding to the significance of our discussion, the Congressional delegation included Members of the House Ways and Means Committee and the Senate Finance Committee who have the principal responsibility for reviewing the request.

Many Hon. Members of the House will be aware of the vigorous campaign which has been mounted in the U.S. Congress to restrict Canadian softwood lumber exports to the United States. Voices have been raised in the Congress arguing that the President should be denied approval to negotiate a comprehensive trade arrangement with Canada until Canadian lumber exports have been cut back. Our delegation warned our American counterparts of the very serious consequences of adopting such a procedure. If Hon. Members have the time to read the report, which I encourage them to do, they will see that we got our message across, we believe, to the American participants.

The report I am tabling today deals only with the plenary discussion. We had extensive discussions in three committees on subjects as varied as softwood lumber exports, the U.S. Farm Bill, the proposed U.S. oil import tax, acid rain and Arctic sovereignty. The detailed report of the three Committees' discussions will be made available to all Hon. Members as soon as it has been completed.

Canada has no more important relationship than our relationship with the United States. The U.S. Congress has a direct and substantial influence on the development of that relationship. These annual meetings, which were initiated in 1959 by Prime Minister Diefenbaker, provide an exceptional opportunity for Canadian Members of Parliament to put Canadian concerns directly to Senators and Congressmen. I believe that the House can be proud of the effective way in which our delegates represented Canadian interests.

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PETITIONS

BILATERAL AID PROGRAM

Mr. Barry Turner (Ottawa-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure and duty, particularly on this day, to honour St. Patrick, a man of peace, to present a petition from the Rideau Park United Church in my riding signed by 92 of my constituents who humbly pray and call upon Parliament to assign a high priority in its bilateral aid program to small-scale agricultural projects which build the confidence, skills and material resources needed to overcome hunger, and to commit itself to gradual and steady steps to untie its bilateral aid program.

OPERATION OF MORGENTALER CLINIC IN TORONTO

Mr. John Parry (Kenora-Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I have the honour to present to this honourable House this morning, four petitions. Three petitions are signed by some hundreds of residents of Balmertown, Red Lake, Madsen, Emo, Dryden and Barclay, in my riding, and call upon Parliament to do everything in its power to prevent the operation of the premises known as the Morgentaler Clinic in the city of Toronto.

LOWER GASOLINE PRICES

Mr. John Parry (Kenora-Rainy River): I have a fourth petition which is again signed by some 100 or so residents of my riding. It calls upon Parliament to ensure that Petro-Canada passes on lower prices to consumers of gasoline in Canada.