

Customs Tariff

the necessary financial means, I believe that our major engineering firms can be compared with and do compete against firms in other countries, whether the United States or even Germany, and that they have already been successful on the international market. I must point out incidentally that the American firms are not the ones we fear the most in Canada.

As for the architectural or engineering firms, I believe that there are much more vulnerable economic sectors in Canada and that Canadians will eventually have to do like almost everyone else in the world and try to find the markets where they are. I believe that our Canadian firms will benefit from the opening up of the American markets much more than the American firms will benefit from a freer access to ours.

[*English*]

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Chairman, would the section that allows a person to bring in \$100 worth of goods every 48 hours allow a farmer to haul a tank down to the United States and get \$100 worth of gasoline every 48 hours?

Mr. Lanthier: If he stays outside Canada 48 hours, yes.

Mr. de Jong: Does that mean that if he stays out for seven days he is able to bring back \$300 worth?

Mr. Lanthier: Yes, once a year.

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Chairman, if he brings his whole family over he will be able to get his year's supply of gasoline in the United States, if he has three or four sons above a certain age. What is the age limit here?

Mr. Lanthier: Mr. Chairman, I can answer that question with ease due to the fact that I am a fourteenth child. If my father had had a car, which unfortunately he did not, he would have been able to do such a thing.

Mr. de Jong: Mr. Chairman, I have one more question. What is the age of eligibility for the \$100 every 48 hours and for the \$300 once a year? Is there any age requirement?

Mr. Lanthier: Aside from the restrictions on alcohol and cigarettes, there is no age limit. If you bring your baby with you, he is allowed his \$100 every 48 hours.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Ouellet: I would like to go back to the remarks made a few minutes ago by the Parliamentary Secretary. He is quite right. In the remarks he made on Monday, he called his Prime Minister a valiant Prime Minister. I realize that the way vacancies are coming up in the Cabinet, the Parliamentary Secretary has to be most polite and kind to his Prime Minister. That might prove to be in his interest sooner or later, and he has my best wishes in any case. However, his statement is very disturbing in my view, because if indeed the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States agreed to allow free trade in goods and services, as he stated in his speech, unless his words went beyond his thoughts or beyond the facts, if indeed the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States agreed to end protectionism in the trading of

goods and services, the example I gave him earlier, Mr. Chairman, concerning engineering firms, the example I used because knowingly the Parliamentary Secretary until very recently belonged to a large Montreal engineering firm, and that example would strike his imagination more than others. But I must say, Mr. Speaker, that services are not exclusive to engineering firms.

I used that example because it was an easy one to understand for the Parliamentary Secretary, but there is a whole range of services which are offered by Canadian firms to Canadians that could be jeopardized by such a decision to end protectionism which benefits small Canadian entrepreneurs performing important services for the Canadian people. I agree with the Parliamentary Secretary that there are three, four, or five large engineering firms in Canada that are capable of measuring up easily to any big firm in the world. But apart from those few larger ones, there is a considerable number of medium-sized and small firms that could lose important contracts to American firms under too harsh a competition. What I am concerned with, and I would like the Parliamentary Secretary to not only alleviate my fears but send a very clear message to all small entrepreneurs who provide Canadians with services and who might be forced into bankruptcy by too harsh competition from the United States.

Mr. Lanthier: Mr. Chairman, there was no reference to free trade in the speech. The reference was to put an end to protectionism. Speaking of protectionism, very seldom do countries have laws to promote protectionism as such. Protectionism has a bad connotation. Whether one is for or against protectionism, the connotation is always bad.

So, I did not say that the two heads of state agreed on free trade. They agreed to end protectionism in both our countries. And I added: given time and the right circumstances. Understood? The idea is to put an end to protectionism in the exchange of goods and services between our two countries. So, there is a difference between putting an end to protectionism and establishing free trade. This is my first point.

Second, I must discuss market principles from a standpoint I am especially familiar with. I would remind my hon. colleague that the smaller firms which are now enjoying a high level of technology in Quebec and more generally in Canada are already competing against bigger firms. And I would point out that small engineering firms do not use the words big or small firms. They use the words large and small firms. There is a difference.

In that sense, of course competition is already there. It is not a matter of looking at the existing market, but of asking ourselves whether we will have another market. The larger and bigger engineering firms in Canada—and smaller ones too, and let me point out that there are engineering firms with no more than ten people which are now operating in Africa, Europe and the United States. It is a matter of opening up to markets. Then when we talk about ending protectionism with