

Softwood Lumber Products Export Charge Act

Members of some parties. I do not know what the answer will be, unless we completely change the rules about petitions in the House.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, in making the presentation, and having made presentations during the last six to eight weeks when the House has been in operation, I have alluded to the fact that I have received thousands of names. I have had two cartons full of petitions containing at least 25 names per page which, I suggest, add up to thousands of names. Perhaps the Hon. Member does not understand the meaning of thousands of names with respect to all of the petitions. This is only part of what is left to be presented in the House. I suggest that if he looks at these petitions and adds the names he will find to his surprise that there are thousands and thousands of names.

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) has raised a point which has concerned the Chair. I have noticed an improvement over a number of weeks in the tone of comment and the content of comment in the presentation of petitions. I am grateful for it.

I believe the Hon. Member for Victoria does have an important point. It is very necessary that the comments that pertain to the petition relate to the petition that is in fact presented. I am sure the Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone) will, as a consequence of a concern raised by a fellow Member of the House, be very careful to take this into account in the presentation of her petitions.

The Hon. Member for Victoria in fact praised the Hon. Member for Mount Royal for having a petition that is legitimate and in the proper form. I am sure the Hon. Member for Mount Royal will try to accede to the wishes of other Hon. Members in the chamber.

APPROPRIATENESS OF COMMENTS ON PRESENTATION OF PETITIONS

Mr. Lorne Greenaway (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Forestry and Mines)): Mr. Speaker, perhaps you could give some advice with respect to the subject of petitions. How long may a Member speak when presenting a petition? It seems to vary from Member to Member, since some presentations are one or two sentences while others are longer and almost become a speech. Perhaps the Speaker could give us some guidance?

Mr. Speaker: The rules are clear. A speech is not acceptable. The Chair has made it quite clear that as far as I am concerned, inflammatory language in introducing the petition is not acceptable to the Chair because it causes difficulties in the chamber. Brevity is the soul of wit, as someone once said, and I also believe that brevity ought to be sought.

Having said that, I say to all Hon. Members that it takes more mental effort to say something with precision and brevity than it does to ramble. I know that all Hon. Members would wish that the Speaker, in listening to their remarks, realize

that they are indeed capable of using succinct language, in brief form, to make their point. I would ask all Hon. Members to do the best they can in that regard.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER PRODUCTS EXPORT CHARGE ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Friday, January 23, 1987, consideration of the motion of Miss Carney that Bill C-37, an Act respecting the imposition of a charge on the export of certain softwood lumber products, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee, and the amendment of Mr. McDermid (p. 2601).

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis) had the floor.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, you have suggested that we make our comments brief and try to do in half the time what otherwise might take the full time. I spoke for five minutes on Friday and I believe I made my point. Therefore, in keeping with your suggestion, I shall yield the floor.

Mr. Russell MacLellan (Cape Breton—The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, the decision to be brief has been made for me since the House has placed a restriction of ten minutes on speeches. I do not believe I can be much more brief than what has already been dictated to me.

This Bill is extremely important in its ramifications on the country. I have already mentioned that there are two very important aspects to this debate; one is the provisions of the Bill respecting the sale of softwood lumber to the United States, the second being the ramifications of the bill itself.

The Bill is detrimental to softwood lumber exporters and the Canadian economy as a whole. It was poorly drafted by the Government and the best arguments on our behalf were not put forward in the negotiations because our negotiators failed to recognize the increased profitability of the softwood lumber industry in the United States.

This memorandum did not come as a result of the negotiating expertise of the Canadian delegation, but because the Americans realized that the profitability of the lumber industry in the United States was improving and that it would be advantageous now to enter into this Memorandum of Understanding that is more favourable to the Americans than to Canada. If the matter went further and on to another forum, the Americans would not be able to reach such an agreement as this.

As a result of this agreement, Canada will allow the United States to dictate to us how we conduct our trade with them. They will have a right to make periodic checks of the softwood