

Softwood Lumber Products Export Charge Act

of debating an export tax Bill. It is the only chance we get to do so. I hope the day comes—and I believe it will come when the New Democratic Party is in power—when every international agreement or treaty entered into by Canada will be eligible or subject to debate, amendment and ratification by the Parliament of Canada. That is long overdue because I can recall the Conservatives during the years of Liberal Government from 1968 to 1984, except for one 10-month period, complaining of treaties and international agreements entered into which we could not debate in Parliament except for the odd occasion when we used an Opposition Day and it was not subject to a vote or an instrument subject to amendment.

● (1550)

A country has to earn the respect of other countries in the exercise of its independence and sovereignty. Why should the U.S. respect our independence and sovereignty? They have been very free in ignoring our sovereignty. They have been very free in failing to respect our independence in our Arctic waters, on cruise missile testing, SDI, and now softwood lumber. This is not the first time and it will not be the last. We keep failing to exercise and stand up for our independence. What is next? Natural gas? Steel? Potash?

The other problem is that when other nations see what the U.S. is able to foist on Canada, why should they not decide that Canada is an easy mark? What the U.S. can make us do, they can make us do as well.

Natural resources are administered by the provinces and harvested according to each province's own likes. It is their resource to manage as they see fit. That is the constitutional fact in Canada. That means that no national Government can allow the Government of another country to interfere with not only the powers of our national Government but with the powers and rights of the provinces and territories which make up our country. No national Government worthy of the name would sign an agreement which would allow a foreign power to interfere.

I suggest to my hon. friends in the Government that they must proceed back to the table with the U.S. and obtain an amendment, Memorandum of Understanding, addendum, or whatever they want to call it, to the present agreement. It will say that the U.S. will respect our sovereignty and independence and accept in good faith our word to behave properly in accordance with the agreement and we will not be party to an agreement which allows the U.S. to examine our books. We are not a satrap of the U.S. We are not a Poland or East Germany, Honduras or Guatemala or the Philippines. We are sovereign and independent. We are different. We must do our own thing and the U.S.A. and every other country must respect that. They will not, however, until we stand up for that independence and sovereignty, even when there is an economic price to pay. Canada is more important than that. We do not need to add new words to our national anthem which say: "Oh, U.S.A., spangled banner awake, Canada stands on guard for you." We do not need that. I want to remind the Government

that Sir John A. Macdonald and John George Diefenbaker defended our independence and sovereignty. They stood up for this nation.

Mr. McDermid: So have we.

Mr. Benjamin: They stood up for its independence and sovereignty.

Mr. McDermid: So have we.

Mr. Benjamin: We do not need agreements which allow this kind of supine sell-out of what Canada is about. I hope the Government will take this Bill off the Order Paper, go back to the U.S. and say this is what we must have, otherwise the agreement is abrogated and we will fight in the courts and under GATT and take the other measures open to us if they want to play that kind of game.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in the second reading debate of Bill C-37, the Softwood Lumber Products Export Charge Act. The previous speaker finished on the question of fighting the battle in the courts. There was a very interesting article by Robin Neill, an economic historian, in *The Ottawa Citizen* on January 3. With respect to fighting it in the courts he said: "Even if Canada lost the case it would be better to take it now rather than gamble with the country's sovereignty for years to come." While we may look at having to pay the 15 per cent export tax on every bit of softwood lumber which goes to the U.S., and while it will cost in the neighbourhood of some \$600 million and jeopardize hundreds upon hundreds of direct and indirect jobs, we have to realize that in addition to the technical factors underlining such an agreement, there is also the other side, the substantive part, namely the process. For me the real downside of this legislation, the real sin, if you will, of the Government, lies on the process side of this equation. It succumbed to the dictation of the U.S. It did not stand up for the rights and independence of this nation.

That the U.S. has the right to set the price of this important natural resource, to regulate it and review it, is simply shocking. Members of the Government say this deal strengthens confederation. It does the exact opposite. The Government has succumbed to the wishes and demands of the Americans as opposed to voicing the aspirations, not only of the industry concerned but the will and determination of our country as a whole.

This is not a single, isolated act by the Government. It reflects a mind-set which is willing to genuflect to the U.S. We have seen in the life of this Parliament so far the Conservative Government's willingness to dismantle FIRA. Some critics would have it that FIRA was anti-foreign investment. It was not. It was pro-foreign investment, but according to Canadian needs, interests and sovereignty. Ninety per cent of all applications were accepted, but only after it was very clear