

Adjournment Debate

Finally, I have a letter from a distraught mother of a young businessman. She says:

My son is in business for himself, until this recession making a decent, honest living for himself, his wife and three small children, as a fireplace builder and bricklayer.

Several times in the past year he has done jobs for people, who have been unable to pay him, either the work he has done or the materials he has used, thus making him unable to meet some of his debts.

Last October the income tax people got on to him for what he owed them. They wanted to know what he was doing about it. He told what and where he was working, and that he hoped to be able to pay his taxes from his earnings for that job. They instantly, the same day, garnisheed his payments from the firm he was working for, so that he had to scrimp to pay for the materials used.

This past week, the income tax people have phoned again, to say that the aforementioned firm had gone bankrupt, so that they—the income tax—had not been able to get the garnisheed money from them. So, back to my son again, \$6,000 plus the interest which has accumulated since October. I think that this is monstrous! My son might as well be on welfare, has worked himself to death for people who will not or cannot pay, and the Government.

This is the kind of attitude the Government displays when businessmen are on their knees.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marcel Dionne (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether my answer is altogether relevant to the Hon. Member's question. I am a little embarrassed, but nevertheless, I shall give the House the details I have here.

The Hon. Member is probably aware that as a result of favourable growing and harvesting conditions in 1982, the potato harvest in Canada and the United States was very abundant. Prices paid to producers throughout Canada, and

not only in British Columbia, are low. However, because of increased imports of potatoes in Western Canada, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) asked last November that a surcharge be placed on all eating potatoes imported in the Thunder Bay and Western customs regions.

After examining this request, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) concluded that a surcharge was not the best way to deal with the situation. The reasons for his decision were forwarded to associations representing the interests of British Columbia's potato producers.

The Hon. Member is probably aware that the authority to impose a surcharge lies with the Minister of Finance, pursuant to Section 8(2) of the Customs Tariff. Consequently, the Minister of Agriculture has no authority to impose the surcharge. It should also be pointed out that potatoes coming from the U.S. are not dumped on the Vancouver market, as might be implied by the Hon. Member's question. By definition, dumping is a practice that consists in selling goods on foreign markets at prices that are lower than those set for the domestic market. Since the price in the United States is the same, there is no question of dumping in the strictly legal sense of the term.

[*English*]

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.

At 6.25 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.