

Customs Tariff

story which we heard was that the American Bill for the harmonized system is still part of the larger and objectionable omnibus trade Bill which I think all Canadians hope will be vetoed by the President if it is in fact adopted by Congress during the next few weeks.

However, Congressman Gibbons plans to introduce separate legislation next week, that is, some time after December 7, to deal with the harmonized system. The American House, like this Parliament, can move quickly when it has to, but at the very least uncertainty reigns and there is clearly no guarantee that the Americans will keep their side of the bargain despite what Canada is being asked to do.

I read reports in the papers over the weekend of the Prime Minister saying that consensus reigns on the issue and it is, therefore, okay to go forward. There is certainly not consensus in the House of Commons, as must be evident to the public from this debate and many other debates which have taken place. My Party believes that Canada should not get locked into a trading deal with the United States unless there is a general election first.

The Prime Minister himself, the Minister of State for Finance, the Minister for International Trade (Miss Carney) and the Minister of Finance have all said that this is the most important commercial arrangement being made by Canada within a generation. The President of the United States says that it is a new economic constitution for North America. Despite all that, we are being faced with a *fait accompli*, with a bunch of snake oil salesmen and saleswomen on the Government side trying to stampede Canadians into a deal without our knowing whether it is really a deal for Canada and without our knowing what the fine print says.

We have seen the elements of the agreement. I have a copy here which I read from time to time. Every time I read it I find new areas which raise questions in my mind rather than satisfying them. We have received *Overview* on the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement. However, to put it mildly, *Overview* is misleading and deceptive, if not intellectually dishonest. If I could say it lied in the House of Commons and be parliamentary, I would use that phrase too. However, in deference to your authority I would not use such a phrase.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Order, order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I think the Hon. Member realizes what he has just done. I hope he will withdraw before he carries on.

Mr. Cassidy: Since I did not say it lied I do not think there is anything to withdraw. However, I will nonetheless defer to your authority and withdraw any remarks which you may have found to be unparliamentary. I think it is fair to say that this, like the speeches made by the government Ministers, is intellectually dishonest.

I will give you an example. The Government has been saying that \$2 billion of tariffs will disappear and that that will mean

money in consumers' pockets. The Government has not said how it intends to make up the \$2 billion in lost revenues. That is an example of the intellectual dishonesty.

I will return to the basic point of these seven or eight amendments which is that, given the actions and irresponsibility of the Government, it is imperative that Parliament take the authority, that the Government be accountable, and that major trade and tariff actions of the Government not be undertaken without prior approval by Act of Parliament or resolution of Parliament. That is a fundamental principle in a parliamentary democracy. This is not Haiti yet. This is still Canada. I hope Hon. Members will support these amendments.

Mr. Dan Heap (Spadina): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to have a chance to support the amendment moved by the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy). The point of his motion is to insist that the Government cannot change regulations regarding reductions or other changes in import duties in response to some deal with another country without referring it to Parliament.

The question has been raised as to why we want this amendment in the law. The answer is that the times demand it. In the past Governments of the day have made such changes by regulation. However, we were now faced with a secret and massive document which may run to a couple of thousand pages of which the majority, according to the Government, is tariff regulations. The Government has said that approximately 1800 pages would be composed of tariff regulations. We have not yet seen those regulations. The Government has promised again and again to show them to us but has not brought them forward.

The Government wants us to give it a blank cheque to change the customs regulations. Such changes have, in the past, wiped out sections of the garment industry and the electrical appliance industry. The Government is asking for a blank cheque to do that in any industry on which it may make a secret deal with any other country, particularly with the United States, which can import products made with cheap labour in order to export them to Canada, not for the benefit of the people who gave that cheap labour but for the benefit of multinational companies based in the United States.

We are asked to trust the Government. We are asked to trust Mr. Reisman, the chief negotiator of this deal, in spite of the fact that a year ago Mr. Reisman said that he would never recommend an agreement to the Canadian Government that did not make substantial progress in limiting and constraining the unilateral right of the United States to use retaliatory measures against Canadian trade. He said that he would never recommend a deal which did not give us the power to defend ourselves against those.

A year later, on October 25 of this year, he said that to suggest that this agreement should provide us with an exemption from American trade remedy law is just the silliest