

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

more discriminatory against Canada and will provide for greater harassment for our exports.

We should have guessed that because we know what the record is of the Prime Minister in his negotiation. I suppose if we really looked at it carefully, we would say that now we end up in the glue. While I approve of the amendment, I think the mover of the amendment, the Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon), will admit that the amendment does not deal with what is really the problem, and that is the dispute settlement mechanism entrenched in this Bill. It is a disaster and a serious mistake. It does not deal with the problem. In fact, it makes it even worse.

**Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to get in on the debate of these amendments early because some of the statements that have been made this morning are totally outlandish.

**Miss MacDonald:** It is not surprising.

**Mr. McDermid:** They must be—

**An Hon. Member:** Challenged.

**Mr. McDermid:**—challenged. Thank you. That is the word that I was looking for. On the dispute settlement mechanism, we had testimony at the committee from a Mr. Pinard. Mr. Pinard is the chairman and executive vice-president and the chief operating officer for Domtar. He appeared with the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. I will not quote him verbatim because his language was rather colourful. He was asked about the dispute settlement mechanism by the Hon. Member for Essex-Windsor (Mr. Langdon). He commented on the tariff reduction. I will not use his words, but he said that it was not the important matter on this. As far as he was concerned, as a manufacturer, the important thing was the dispute settlement mechanism. I quote:

This agreement allows Canada to have a special arrangement for disputes and countervailing duty. We now have a bilateral tribunal, and that should make a hell of a difference. I know what I am talking about because I have been in the court in the U.S. several times for my company and this tribunal in the States is worth nothing; it is very biased. If you challenge a decision, it takes five years to get an answer. You go back to square one for a rehearing. The U.S. found it very difficult to agree to this tribunal because this puts them under the spotlight.

They do not like this bilateral tribunal. There is certainly a body of expert opinion that says if we had had this bilateral tribunal we would probably not be stuck with this . . . duty on lumber. So we have something there.

That is the testimony from Mr. Pinard, who was at our committee. He made it very clear that this was a very, very important part of the agreement. Almost all the amendments that have been brought forward are from the New Democratic Party. There is a quite a list of them. There is one from the Liberals and the balance are from the New Democratic Party.

What these amendments basically say is that the House of Commons is going to start administering this legislation, as well as being parliamentarians and creating the legislation.

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The NDP now wants the House of Commons to start administering all the boards and commissions involved in the free trade agreement and probably any other agreement that comes along or any organization that is set up through legislation. That really is the job of the bureaucracy through Order in Council. We hire the bureaucracy to administer legislation that we bring in. The whole purpose of delegating power to the Governor in Council is to remove from Parliament the burden of dealing with administrative detail. If we got involved in administrative detail in every piece of legislation that has been passed by this House of Commons, the House would be at a complete standstill. We could not operate. These proposals will basically do that. It would be an exceptional departure from normal practice to make administrative actions of this type subject to approval of a committee of the House.

We are talking about Governor in Council appointments. By virtue of Standing Orders 103 and 104 they are now automatically referred to the appropriate standing committee for review. Its members can call up these appointees and question them at the committee hearings to find out if they qualify for the positions.

**Mr. Blackburn (Brant):** What happens when we say no?

**Mr. McDermid:** That has happened. The qualifications of an individual suggested for an appointment were found not appropriate and the appointment was not made. I believe the standing committees have an important role to play. Appointments to the CRTC are subject to the Standing Committee on Broadcasting. The members of the Standing Committee met these appointees, put them through the grill, ensured that they qualified and had the necessary experience for those positions and approved them. Very little opposition has been raised by the New Democratic Party and the Liberals, if any, in these hearings. Members have all the time in the world at these meetings to question appointees on their qualifications.

We have found that the appointments made by the Government by and large have been of people well qualified.

**Mr. Keeper:** It is a rubber stamp.

**Mr. McDermid:** Was it a rubber stamp when Ian Deans' appointment was made? He was questioned before the committee. He was qualified. He had good experience in labour relations. He was in that field before serving here. He served provincially as well as federally and is fully conversant with those things. What about the latest appointments to the CRTC?

**Miss MacDonald:** Absolutely.

**Mr. McDermid:** The statement was made that the appointments to the CRTC were of very high quality.