

Supply

Thursday, are a threat to the economic future of both our countries.

Certainly, this tariff cannot and will not be forgotten. We must continue to act in a manner which will assure the people of British Columbia that their interests come first, that their livelihoods will be protected and that any trade agreement will be in the best interests of all working Canadians. Our best customer, our largest market, is at stake. Canadian jobs and security are at stake. I plead with all Hon. Members of the House today to band together to find a resolve to this terrible situation which faces the people of Mission—Port Moody, British Columbia and all of Canada.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I was interested to hear the remarks of the Hon. Member. I know he does follow this industry with care. However, I just want to ask him about the politics of this matter. His own Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) made it clear in the House just an hour ago that he has neither telephoned President Reagan, nor has he been telephoned, and he has not had any kind of written or telex response to his letter, and so on, from last Friday. I have been around here long enough to know how this place works. I think the people of Mission—Port Moody should be advised as to how this place works. The only way a situation such as this can be quickly resolved is through the Prime Minister's Office. The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) can do things, as well as can the Minister of International Trade (Mr. Kelleher), and so on. However, the fact is that President Reagan has not yet signed this 35 per cent duty into law, so we have a very small window opening in which to move. If the Government moves with speed and with some intelligence, we can get that 35 per cent duty taken off and we can get rid of it.

The Hon. Member is the chairman of the federal Conservative caucus. Why does he think the Prime Minister has not telephoned President Reagan? Is it not high enough on the agenda or are there other things he would rather be doing? Is it in fact true that the Prime Minister has known all along that the deal which was going to be cut to get these free trade talks going and get past the 10-10 stalemate vote in the Senate Finance Committee, was that the forest industry, particularly the shake and shingle industry, would be hung out to dry, as it is of this moment?

Mr. St. Germain: Mr. Speaker, why the Prime Minister has not taken the initiative I believe has been clearly enunciated. On Friday he sent a telex. Monday was a national holiday in the United States. I would like to read the telex into the record. It states:

Dear Mr. President,

I want to convey to you the profound disappointment of my government at the action you announced yesterday regarding softwood shingles and shakes. The imposition of a 35 per cent tariff is a punitive measure against Canadian products. This unjustifiable action is all the more appalling in the context of freer trade negotiations between our two countries having been officially initiated this week.

This American initiative is pure protectionism, the precise thing you and I pledged, in Quebec and Washington, we would seek to avoid. Canada is now placed in the position of being forced to consider an appropriate response.

I deeply regret this action by the Administration.

I do not know how much stronger one can get. I believe the Prime Minister has lived up to his responsibility as we knew he would. The people of this country gave him a mandate to govern, and we will govern the way we see fit. I know the Hon. Member is sincere in his thoughts in wanting to reach a solution. I know there is a political aspect in his question, but I also know he would sooner lose this one politically and win it for the industry and the province, as I would.

I can assure the Hon. Member that I will be speaking to the Prime Minister on this issue, as I have spoken to him before. If it is felt necessary within the wisdom of the operation of our Government, I am certain the Prime Minister will make the call, but at a time he deems correct. I think we must look at the submission he made to the President of the United States last Friday. I am sure the proper action will be taken in due course.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I know the Hon. Member is on the record as opposing the log and bolt exports, as is his Government now. The Liberal Party seems to be the only Party left in the world which does not understand that particular part of the issue. I would like to hear further from the Hon. Member because it seems clear to me from wide consultations that if this 35 per cent duty is left against the shake and shingle industry of British Columbia, if we do not move to have it removed while it is still as yet unsigned by the President, the U.S. will take that as a signal from the Mulroney administration that it is prepared to accept the imposition and maintenance of it for the next five years. The duty will come into play on June 6. The signal the U.S. administration will take from this—and I understand this from discussions I have had with members of the U.S. Congress in both the Senate and the House—will be that Secretary of Commerce Baldrige next Tuesday will be given the green light to initiate the International Trade Commission investigation into injury of Canadian softwood going to the United States.

I know the Hon. Member has read the case law in the carbon black case and knows that the rules of the game have been changed in relation to the 1983 countervail we won. I would like to hear the Hon. Member's comments because I have been led to believe, that if the Prime Minister does not phone and ask that this be taken away before the President pulls his pen out of his holster and signs it into law, it will be the green light for the Department of Commerce to begin the investigation next Tuesday against our softwood industry, and there go a million jobs, not 4,000 jobs.

Mr. St. Germain: Again I reiterate, that I do not think the Prime Minister could enunciate his position more clearly than in the letter he sent to the President of the United States. There is no one in this House who thinks we should stand back on this particular issue. As the Hon. Member knows, Cabinet at this particular time is deciding how the situation should be approached. I agree with the Hon. Member that the only way is for the 35 per cent tariff on cedar shakes and shingles to be