

Softwood Lumber Products Export Charge Act

1. From January 1, 1980, to date, what were Canadian National's revenues and expenditures with regard to the (a) Chapais subdivision (from Franquet to Chapais and Chibougamau, mile 72.1 to mile 199.1) (b) Taschereau subdivision (from La Sarre to Cochrane, Ontario, mile 99.0 to mile 181.0) (c) Val d'Or subdivision (from Senneterre to Val d'Or, Malartic and Noranda, mile 00.0 to mile 101.5) sections of line?

2. Did the government spend any money closing down CN lines in the Abitibi region during the same period and, if so, in what amounts?

Mr. David Kilgour (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, the management of Canadian National Railways advises as follows:

1. Information regarding revenues and expenditures by subdivision, including those in the Abitibi area, is considered confidential and, for marketing reasons, cannot be communicated.

2. No.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I wish to inform the House that because of the ministerial statement, Government Orders will be extended by 16 minutes, beginning at one o'clock today.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER PRODUCTS EXPORT CHARGE ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed from Monday, January 26, 1987, consideration of the motion of Miss Carney that Bill C-37, an Act respecting the imposition of a charge on the export of certain softwood lumber products, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee, and the amendment of Mr. McDermid (p. 2601).

Mr. Marc Ferland (Portneuf): Late yesterday afternoon, Mr. Speaker, I was unceremoniously interrupted by the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) who did not seem to appreciate the fact that we are trying to make him see the light with respect to the situation as it relates to Bill C-37.

As I was saying, the agreement on softwood lumber has no bearing whatsoever on Canada's sovereignty. Opposition Members have been unable to come up with any kind of solution to this question, and they are trying to convince Canadians that our sovereignty is on the line. That is utter nonsense because, pursuant to the provisions of the agreement, any information we might give the United States will be known to the public, and American officials will not have to come up here to check the facts.

The signing of this agreement is a major achievement. Compared with a suspension agreement, this settlement is infinitely more preferable. As in the case of a suspension agreement, the money remains in Canada, but what matters more is that it spares us the irksome control of the provinces' forestry management methods that would result from a suspension agreement.

The Opposition just cannot understand that if a countervailing duty had been imposed as we feared, and I hope all Hon. Members realize that, the forest industry would have had to assume the double burden of a tariff and an increased stumpage fee, for the only way for us to get rid of a countervailing duty would have been to increase stumpage fees to the point where the United States Department of Trade would unilaterally decide that the alleged subsidy was compensated for.

Mr. Speaker, the Opposition assuredly understands nothing, absolutely nothing about the softwood lumber issue and the benefits which this agreement will have for forestry workers in Canada.

Mr. Speaker, I suggest that the definition of a specialist given by Mr. Guy Antoine Lafleur, professor of political science at Laval University, applies perfectly well to our Opposition friends, and I quote: "I am very suspicious of specialists, for a specialist is someone who learns more and more about less and less, until he reaches the point where he knows everything about nothing."

Mr. Speaker, I feel that this remark applies perfectly well to members opposite who are really trying to convince Canadians that this lumber agreement does not benefit Canada, when the fact is that it is altogether beneficial to the forestry workers and industry.

[English]

Mr. Maurice Foster (Algoma): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to Bill C-37 and the motion moved by the Government. I was interested in the comments made by the Hon. Member for Portneuf (Mr. Ferland) because he has obviously swallowed hook, line and sinker, the Government's position that this agreement really does not infringe on Canada's sovereignty. I would ask the Hon. Member to read statements made by Maxwell Cohen, one of Canada's foremost experts on international law who was a judge on the International Court of Justice in the Gulf of Maine resource dispute and a former Canadian Chairman of the International Joint Commission. He stated in the *Ottawa Citizen* on January 3:

The lumber deal is a dangerous precedent that threatens Canadian sovereignty.

He goes on to say:

It is a strange procedure to allow someone to monitor our own stuff.

And:

They maintained the unilateralness of something that is joint in effect because the Americans have a right to know everything about Canada's activity, information or anything else.