

*The Budget***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]*

Mr. Cooper: I ask that the remaining questions be allowed to stand.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

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MOTION TO ADJOURN UNDER S. O. 52

SOFTWOOD LUMBER INDUSTRY

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief.

Members will know that yesterday I appealed to Your Honour, given the very important and unfair decision on Friday by the U.S. commerce department on the softwood lumber tariff on exports from Canada to the United States and the importance of that issue to all of Canada and the over 300 forest communities whose jobs will be potentially threatened by this decision.

At that time, the ruling was to give consideration to how this issue would develop. Since yesterday, when I raised this matter in the House for an emergency debate, the issue has escalated dramatically. We know cabinet is meeting to consider retaliation against the United States. This is quickly escalating into a dramatic trade war between our country and the United States.

Given that the government is considering what actions should be taken, if any, against the United States in an attempt to defend our sovereignty and our right to make our own decisions in the way we manage our forests in Canada, I think it is opportune and timely that this House have an opportunity to present its opinions and comments so that the Prime Minister can hear what Canadians have to say about this issue.

I would again urge you to consider this matter seriously to give the House and all members an opportunity to have their say on this very important issue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I know the hon. member presented his case yesterday and also again today. The Chair is looking at it as the day progresses. I know the table officers and the Speaker particularly will be looking at it. At this time we would like to reserve and to have another look at the application.

*[English]***THE BUDGET**

FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF THE MINISTER OF FINANCE

The House resumed from Thursday, February 27, consideration of the motion of Mr. Mazankowski that this House approves in general the budgetary policy of the government; and the amendment of Mr. Gray (Windsor West) (p.7631).

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Before I recognize the hon. Minister of Veterans Affairs, because of Statements by Ministers the sitting of the House will be extended 27 minutes during the lunch hour.

Hon. Gerald S. Merrithew (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, it is my honour to take part in the budget debate again today and to speak to Canadians about the importance of this government's fiscal plan as outlined by the Minister of Finance on February 25 in this very Chamber.

At best, the debates in this House combine partisan differences with healthy exchange of views and ideas and allow the public to gain some perspective on what the issues are and how we as members of Parliament approach those issues.

We as a government have just produced a document in the form of the budget that in many ways sets out our philosophy. The vast majority of those who follow government and political issues think that this budget document is a very positive approach to managing the Canadian economy in these difficult times.

Our country faces a very serious threat to its economic future in the form of a large accumulated debt. Let us all be honest and admit that. We are spending 36 cents out of every tax dollar just to pay the interest on our accumulated debt.

To pay 36 per cent of all of your family income to service your own personal debts would cause a family crisis. It is a crisis for our Canadian family as well. If we do not exercise control of our spending, we will destroy our ability to build a solid future for Canada.

I know there are some members who feel that our present difficulties are so great that they must be tended to on a crisis basis. I know that people have immediate needs and they are hurting. But we have to realize that the problems of a debt plagued economy can never be