

Government Orders

• (1240)

It is very clear here that the Americans in attempting to protect their own economic interests are taking steps that could, if they scuttle the agreement in the United States, benefit Canadian interests in ensuring that those engaged in our economy receive a fair shake for what they are doing.

The amendment in front of us today does nothing less than ensure that our legislation is exactly the same or carries exactly the same interests forward as what the Americans are doing in theirs.

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP): Mr. Speaker, it is my pleasure to stand in this House and support the New Democratic Party motion on Bill C-57 to provide the businesses and people of Canada with the same rights under the WTO as the Americans have.

I want to start my remarks by sharing with the House and the people of Canada the fact that I had an opportunity to meet with a number of U.S. senators and congressmen last spring. The purpose of the meetings were to discuss certain issues relating to Canada and the U.S. with respect to steel production, steel trade, exports and imports, as well as the question of the durum wheat export problems that the Americans perceive to be having with Canada.

This is what I concluded during the course of our discussions. We met with about 16 or 17 senators and congressmen from the United States. They are not free traders. They are not people who respect international agreements if the international agreements and free trade threaten their industries or jobs in their country or threaten markets which they have captured during the course of doing business.

We should not be discarding or brushing off Americans as incompetent business people. Americans usually undertake business to make money. They undertake business around the world to make money around the world. They do not give other countries concessions such as: "We will do a little business with your country and you can do a little business with our country and make a lot of money off us at the expense of jobs in the United States, at the expense of United States industry".

Americans are not stupid people and neither are their business people. They know full well when they see a business opportunity they will take full advantage of that business opportunity to maximize their profits and returns for their people.

From this visit with these American senators and congressmen I also concluded that they view trade with Canada as important, but they view protecting their own industries and their own jobs to be of greater importance. In view of that they have laws which the member for The Battlefords—Meadow

Lake has already outlined. They have clauses in their legislation to protect their industry. Under Bill C-57 we do not have the same protection with respect to the WTO for our own industry, businesses and producers.

Earlier in the day I spoke about the importance of the steel producers in Canada and the problems they are having with the Americans. Now even under the North American free trade agreement the Americans are able to say to the steel producers in Canada: "We appreciate your competition, but you are hurting jobs in the United States. Therefore we are going to undertake to countervail and create a little bit of a problem for your industry".

There are mechanisms in the agreements, but whenever they do this it causes a great deal of expense to the steel producers in Canada because they have to comply with all the American laws that protect the American industry. It costs them money for lawyers. It costs them money for analyses. It costs them money to produce an argument in support of their position with respect to exporting steel from Canada to the United States.

By the way, Canadian producers do not dump steel in the United States; they produce steel for contracts they have received in the United States of America. They produce the steel ready made. It is already pre-sold once it is there, but the Americans still do not like this process.

• (1245)

Bill C-57 is about 200 pages in length and is a fairly substantial bill. I know all five members of the House who are left here right now seem to be concerned about the bill and seeing it passed in its entirety. New Democrats on the other hand are quite concerned that the bill provide the same protection to its producers and manufacturers in Canada as the American legislation provides to their producers and manufacturers. That is all New Democrats are asking for.

We are asking for fairness. We are asking for equity. We are asking that the Government of Canada stand up on behalf of Canadian manufacturers, workers and others in the international market. The international market and other countries will be standing up for themselves. Unless Canadians feel it is a priority to protect and promote our own industry we have a real serious problem.

Therefore in this motion we are asking the government to do what other countries have done for their people. We are not asking for anything more. We are not asking even to be provocative. We are just saying that we should do what others have done. Let us do what the government is obliged to do, that is to protect Canadians in the event of trade agreements.

Mr. Taylor: Do the right thing.