

*Softwood Lumber Products*

I must say that the suggestion that we export raw and unprocessed logs runs contrary to NDP policy, to Liberal policy and to Conservative policy. It runs contrary to the policy of every provincial Government regardless of its political stripe. The worst thing this country could possibly do would be to open the door for the export of raw logs, as suggested by the Hon. Member for Comox—Powell River (Mr. Skelly). That would be in contradiction to British Columbia NDP policy, government history, Conservative policy and Liberal policy across Canada. That is not a viable solution. The export of raw logs would do very little to reduce the unemployment which may result in Atlantic Canada, because a great deal of the work is done at the mill as well as in the woods. That would be a half a loaf at the very best and would not solve the problem.

In the main, the small, private millers in Atlantic Canada own their own land at a major cost and do not have cheap stumpage under those circumstances. It is on that basis, among others, that the lumber bureau did ask us to continue to negotiate. Thank God we saved a major portion of the industry.

**Hon. Donald J. Johnston (Saint-Henri—Westmount):** Mr. Speaker, since I have been a Member of this House—not that many years—I have had great respect and continue to have great respect for the Hon. Member for Carleton—Charlotte (Mr. McCain). However, I have seldom heard him utter such drivel on a subject with which he is familiar, or make statements which so obviously follow the Party line in an attempt to put the best face on a difficult, if not impossible, situation into which Canada has been seduced, as I have today.

● (1320)

He refers to our previous Governments and the relationship we had with the U.S. I can say that perhaps the U.S. did not love the Liberal Government. Perhaps President Reagan did not love Prime Minister Trudeau. True, I do not ever recall seeing Mr. Trudeau and Mr. Reagan singing together as the current Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) did with President Reagan at the Quebec City Summit. However, I can tell you one thing, our Government was respected in Washington.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Johnston:** It was not loved, perhaps, but it was respected. There is no respect for that Government in Washington. In fact, Washington is almost contemptuous of the Government. We witnessed that yesterday. How many times did Prime Minister Trudeau feel obliged to summon the Vice-President of the U.S. to Ottawa to give him a so-called tongue-lashing because the Prime Minister was dissatisfied with actions taken by the American Government? The Prime Minister obviously feels deeply offended that he has given away all the chips, he terminated FIRA, savaged the NEP, genuflected at every conceivable opportunity and even looked for opportunities to genuflect before Washington, and despite all that he is unable to strike any kind of trade deal except a disastrous trade deal on softwood lumber.

The Hon. Member for Carleton—Charlotte referred to precedents and I will do so in a moment. However, trade, as we know, is Canada's life-blood. Some 30 per cent of our GNP is dependent upon trade. The forestry sector has historically been the backbone or mainstay of Canadian exports. So it remains and so hopefully it will continue to be unless it is completely crippled by the ineptitude and blundering of the Government. The U.S. takes almost 80 per cent of our exports and is critical to the survival of the forestry industry. Intelligent management, and I underline those words, of that trading relationship is absolutely necessary. In fact, it is probably the single most important challenge for this country in its external commercial relations.

The softwood deal we are looking at now is probably the historic low point of any trading relationship Canada has had. We were not looking for miraculous solutions from the Minister for International Trade (Miss Carney). She had to travel a road, it is true, but it was a road already well travelled by previous Liberal Governments. I want to expand on that point in a moment. We watched the Minister in her previous role and so we did not have unrealistic expectations of her; we didn't expect much. However, we did expect a minimum of competence and that is all, frankly, that was required. The reason for that is, as I said, because the precedents were there.

**Mr. McDermid:** Where were you when the NEP was announced?

**Mr. Johnston:** I was here in 1983.

**Mr. McDermid:** You did not even know it was coming.

**Mr. Johnston:** That Hon. Member was here as well.

**Mr. McDermid:** You admitted it in your book!

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Blackburn (Brant):** John, did you read his book?

**Mr. McDermid:** I did.

**Mr. Waddell:** That will teach you.

**Mr. Johnston:** Mr. Speaker, if I had known I was going to be subject to that kind of silly abuse I would not have autographed the Hon. Member's book.

The Prime Minister said that the Minister has the ball, watch her. We watched her. We watched her fumble. We watched her trip. We watched her slide. We watched her fall. On this issue all she had to do was carry the ball down a wide open field, no opposition, and yet she ended up in the bleachers. What does this portend for other complex and complicated trade negotiations which she is involved in?

Lest you think I am exaggerating let me take you back to the Government's statement with respect to its strong position and the cards it held on the softwood lumber deal. If you will allow me to do so, and not subtract from my time the unruly