

Oral Questions

basis for this petition to be accepted. We believe that the inquiry in question was conducted some years ago, that nothing has been changed, and that there need not be the cost to the Americans, or the apprehension that would be caused to Canadians, by proceeding with that action. The Ambassador will make this representation following full consultation with the provinces, with industry, with labour, and with representatives of the House of Commons, some of whom will be going to Washington to be part of the approach we make.

FUTURE OF CANADA-UNITED STATES NEGOTIATIONS

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I will direct my supplementary question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Will Ambassador Gotlieb, on behalf of the Canadian Government and all the people whom he has enumerated, make it very clear to Secretary Baldrige that if the United States proceeds with its action against softwood lumber that would put in clear jeopardy the proposed and continuing free trade talks which have now been started? Do we see this of such importance that we would say to them that the Canadian people will not accept continuing the talks under the threat of intimidation in terms of a new U.S. tariff on softwood lumber?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, we see the threat that is posed to Canada by that countervail measure, and by a number of other protectionist measures that are growing in the United States, as indicative of just how absolutely important it is that Canada try as best it can to put in place more effective trade relations with the United States as compared to the system we have right now.

U.S. TARIFF ON CANADIAN CEDAR SHAKES AND SHINGLES—
LOSS OF JOBS

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It is with regard to the shakes and shingles issue. I wish to quote the Minister who said the following today:

We've made the point that this is something we disagreed with for the various reasons that I set out in my response yesterday... But we believe that that should be behind us now.

Will the Minister of Finance explain in good conscience how he can forget and brush away the fact that come this Friday, June 6, 1986, some 4,000 people in British Columbia will be without work? Are they the forgotten people in these trade talks?

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me clarify something for the Hon. Member. He was not at the scrum when that comment was made. That comment was made in the context of whether or not there would be further escalation. Obviously, the Government is very concerned about the impact of the shakes and shingles matter on the industry. There are 4,000 people employed in that industry, not all of whom will lose their jobs.

As I said yesterday, we have indicated that we will be reviewing this matter on a continuing basis with members of the industry, both labour and management, to see how the shakes and shingles matter affects them. I caution the Hon. Member not to use the number 4,000—4,000 people will not lose their jobs; it will be considerably fewer.

GOVERNMENT MEASURES

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary question is also for the Minister of Finance. Other than demonstrating concern on the floor of the House of Commons for the workers in British Columbia, will the Minister not take the time to stand in the House and explain to the Canadian people and, more important, to those workers, what his Government will do to protect and ensure those jobs in British Columbia? What measures will he take on behalf of the people of British Columbia?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I think it is very clear by the actions we have taken during the period of time since the U.S. took this action that we are very concerned about the affect of this matter on that industry. We have tried to get the Americans to reverse their position. We have tried to get the Americans to agree to some compensation. All these matters are very clear evidence of our concern for the industry.

• (1420)

There is a difference of opinion on what will be the effect. Surely the Hon. Member should understand that until we get a clear understanding of that, it would be inappropriate for the Government to act. However, we have made it quite clear that we will be reviewing the matter on an ongoing basis with members of the industry.

IMPOSITION OF TARIFFS—UNILATERAL ACTION

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the same Minister. In recent weeks we have seen the United States take countervailing action in a number of sectors which in principle are free trade sectors between us and the United States. Tomorrow the Americans are likely to do the same thing in another free trade sector, namely, softwoods. Considering that the Government is in the process of negotiating a series of new so-called free trade sectors, would the Minister not agree that, before doing that, the first item for agreement ought to be an accord or a mechanism of some kind which would put an end to unilateral action by either Government in these free trade sectors? Is that not what it should be all about?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Leader of the New Democratic Party will recall that about two hours ago, or a little less than that, he and I had an exchange on precisely this question. I replied for the Government at that time.