

- countervail and anti-dumping actions will be subject to binding dispute settlement, and
- other trade disputes will be dealt with through a formal dispute settlement procedure under the Canada-U.S. Trade Commission.

The Opposition says that binding dispute settlement is of no value, we are better off without it. Here's what Gordon Cummings, President of National Sea Products had to say about the current situation and how binding dispute settlement will improve it:

"[At present] we find that the U.S. political lobbyists have been hard at work; that the [United States Trade] Commission is judge, jury and prosecutor in one; that we stand guilty unless we can prove ourselves innocent ...

"What the Free Trade Agreement can and will do is stop the frivolous U.S. actions, the bullying and the pre-judgement that has hurt the Atlantic Fishery (and some other sectors I can't claim to speak for, like lumber, potash, pork and tires). I have no reservations in speaking for myself and for National Sea Products when I say we welcome the dispute settlement mechanism outlined in the Free Trade Agreement. And nothing has shaken my strong impression that the rest of the Atlantic Canadian fishing industry feels the same way."

That is the assessment of a senior spokesman for an industry that in recent years has faced six countervail actions and two anti-dumping actions. Other businesses agree. Do they know something the Opposition does not?

Binding dispute settlement was a key objective for Canada in the negotiations. It constitutes an important shield against U.S. protectionism.

As Ambassador Alan Gottlieb has said:

"The U.S. political system is well adapted to allowing the 'losers' to seek protection... this is an age of special interests. The [U.S.] legislative agenda is now run largely by committee and sub-committee chairmen...beyond the control of any President. They interact with highly motivated, handsomely financed special interest groups, seeking legislative fixes to their problems."