

● (1240)

It is now six months since the Prime Minister informed the House of the Government's intention to pursue a bilateral trade agreement with the United States. Opposition Members have been railing loud and long against this approach. They have been railing and they have been wailing but they have also been failing. They have failed to come up with any viable alternatives because they have none. Indeed, Canadians are still not clear where the Liberal Party stands. Its external affairs critic says that he agrees with the recommendation of the Macdonald Commission that Canadians negotiate a comprehensive trade agreement with the U.S. However, its trade critic disagrees. Who knows where the Leader of the Opposition stands on this critical issue? Some day I assume he will let us know. As for NDP Members, they appear to be leaning toward a policy of heavy-handed Government intervention in the economy, nationalization of some industries, central planning, import controls, price controls and currency exchange controls—a policy of economic barricades. It would isolate Canada from the rest of the world. It would decimate our trade with the rest of the world and throw many Canadians out of work. Policies such as these have never worked in the past and they would be catastrophic today in a world in which countries have become interlinked by trade and investment. A state controlled economy is repugnant to a majority of Canadians today.

Finally, let me reiterate for the benefit of Hon. Members opposite that the Government has launched a major initiative to negotiate a better framework for the conduct of our trade relations with the United States. If those Members are genuine in their concern for lumber workers and farmers, they will lend their support to this important endeavour.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I do not know who wrote the Minister's speech, but I found it to be both naive and nasty. Certainly one could have put it together by reading press clippings. I expected something more. As the Minister read it, I was surprised that he could not go on the record with a few of his own words. I could tell that he had not listened to what had been said on this side of the House. I gave my speech in what I thought was the good interests of the country, looking for some kind of multi-Party support to do something in the United States. I do not think the Minister truly understands even what he just read.

He said that he did not have any direct relations, diplomatic or otherwise, other than with the administration of the United States. I attended the meeting in Vancouver when the Minister offered to provide amendments to a Bill before Congress. I have read the document which was sent to the United States. It dealt with handling and transportation. It did not deal with the issue which is now very clear in the minds of both Republicans and Democrats in the U.S. Senate and in the House of Representatives. They have a grass roots political issue; they are concerned about the degree of penetration, and they want to put their workers back to work. They have

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dropped the stumpage issue and the subsidization issue. The Minister is probably well aware of what are the implications for British Columbia of the section on competitive bidding and the rules for removal rights in HR-2451.

I should like to hear him comment on whether he agrees that it is high time to get a major delegation of well informed Canadians down into those areas of the United States where there is a continuing dissemination of inappropriate, misleading and at times false information about the issue, and to deal with the two million Americans who produce commodities which come into the Canadian market. We know the reason for the editorials in the U.S. newspapers. Approximately 57 per cent of the newsprint used in that country comes from Canada. Obviously they will protect their own vested interest of \$3.4 billion last year in Canadian newsprint. We know why home builders will continue to be publicly supportive of Canadian SPF. It is because they buy it competitively and they know that it is a better quality product for construction.

We as a Parliament and as a country are not dealing with a matter with which Members of the U.S. Senate and House are prepared to deal. I am referring to the grass roots politics of the matter. Short of doing what I suggested in the House today, I should like to hear what else the Minister proposes. A continuation of the model of simply going through Washington, our 13 trade outlets and our provincial trade outlets in the United States will not get to the grass roots issue in the U.S. and will not get the political signal back to the Republicans and Democrats before they go on the floor of their House and pass a protectionist Bill. I think the Minister agrees that it will be based upon Sam Gibbons' HR-2451 model. It will have more in it related to various other commodities such as natural gas. However, the issue is not being dealt with by the Government, and I find it incredible that the Minister's speech was nasty—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Kelleher: Mr. Speaker, in reply to the Hon. Member, I point out to him that neither I nor any member of the Government ever offered or gave to Mr. Gibbons and Congress suggested amendments to his Bill. In fact, what we sent down and submitted to him was a critique of the legislation, in which we quite clearly said that in its present form it was not acceptable to the Government of Canada. I am sure it would not have been acceptable to the Hon. Member for Skeena.

Also I point out that perhaps the Hon. Member is not aware of what arose from our last meeting in Washington. I should like to advise him directly that the Americans have not abandoned, nor have they dropped their claims about our stumpage practices or their claim that our industry is subsidized. I want the Hon. Member to know that both those claims by the Americans are alive and well.

Also I would point out that indeed we are attempting to do something. I have already listed for the Hon. Member and for other Hon. Members opposite the number of meetings we have had and are continuing to have with the U.S. administration in attempting to resolve the problem. We are continuing to meet