

Softwood Lumber Products

should be proud, and for which the Government should be congratulated.

● (1310)

Yes, there have been difficulties but these difficulties have not emanated from the negotiations. Perhaps the major precedent set by this situation is that there will still be an opportunity to negotiate. If adjustments are made in Canada, there will be adjustments made to the tax imposed. What more could a country ask of another country?

Hon. Members have spoken of sovereignty. Every time a country signs a trade deal it loses an element of its sovereignty. It must indeed meet certain standards and specifications for the product in the market in which the negotiation has been conducted. In the case of fruit and vegetable exports, sanitary conditions must be met. In the case of meat and food exports, health conditions must be met. The list is endless. Whatever trade deal we undertake, we commit ourselves to the standards of another country because that is what the other country wants. The customer is always right in the private sector.

The customer, the United States, has expressed itself and has compromised with Canada. It has kept this matter on the negotiating table where it belongs and where it would not be had legislation been passed, as it unequivocally would have been passed without this type of negotiation. It is immoral not to give the Government and the industry the credit it deserves for the plans they have made and the negotiations which have been successfully concluded.

When the Conservative Party came into power in 1984, we took the place of a former Government whose Prime Minister had been treated with contempt and described with profanities or obscenities. That is the kind of relationship we had in the United States. When we came into power we were asked to remember that the former Prime Minister of Canada had said to the Queen of this Commonwealth about the Constitution: "Well, if you don't like it, just hold your nose and sign it anyway". That is a hard position for any Government that wishes to establish good relations to find itself in.

When the Law of the Sea Conference and the 200-mile limit and its restrictions were negotiated, we could not get votes from our Commonwealth partners in the United Nations. They were not available to us. Neither the Prime Minister nor the Foreign Minister of that day asked our foreign legations for their support. Do not criticize this Government for the errors of the past.

Every trade negotiation the United States has undertaken since the 1930s has been subject to legislation then in place which offered the United States Trade Department the opportunity to impose duties or penalties at its borders if a particular industry in a particular community within the United States were to be hurt. That provision has existed for some time and we have never, in any negotiation with the United States, been able to override it. Why then is criticism being pointed at this Government which is bound by historic

treaty and agreement? The weakness is not in what has been done recently, but in the historic negligence of trade negotiators since about 1935. Do not forget that the Liberal Party has been in power for some 39 of the last 49 years. It conducted these negotiations and it is now throwing poisoned arrows at itself.

No country should be asked by its Opposition or by its people to put every single, solitary item of discussion on the public table. That is not good business practice. As an example, I cite the negotiations in the fisheries trade. At that time there was no way a member of the Opposition could preview what the Liberal Government was offering in its negotiations. When Liberal Members were questioned carefully, no answers were available. Except for the ill-advised approach taken, particularly in the Law of the Sea Conference and the settlement of the 200-mile limit, I was quite prepared to support the secrecy which the Prime Minister and Ministers of the time requested. A poker player does not turn his cards face up on the table until the deal is completed. There is not one private industry, businessman or conscientious director of a board who would reveal to stockholders the total plan the company has for expansion and development. Businessmen seek the greatest amount of good will with customers possible. It is very difficult for a Government of this land to establish good will with the United Kingdom, the European Economic Community or Japan if it is to be chastised, criticized and condemned by opposition Parties.

This is a Parliament of three Parties and there must be support for trading efforts made by the Government of the day regardless of what Government is in power. If there is a weakening factor in any trade negotiation in which Canada has entered in a search for freer trade, it is in the condemnatory, critical, idiotic internal criticism arising jointly from opposition Parties.

Mr. Langdon: Your own lumber bureau.

Mr. McCain: Our own lumber bureau met with our caucus and I was present during that meeting. Our own lumber bureau congratulated the Government on the deal.

Mr. Langdon: Oh, come on.

Mr. McCain: Oh, yes, it did. I was there. I do not know what any individual of that bureau may have said, but I know what the official message was. It did ask—

Mr. Parry: What else could it be, Fred?

Mr. McCain: Just a minute. The bureau did ask that there be continued negotiations on the basis of the information given by the Hon. Member for Fundy—Royal (Mr. Corbett) that the tax was not justified in Atlantic Canada. However, the bureau felt that it was the best deal that could possibly have been made under the circumstances. It asked for further negotiations to try to get a better deal for Atlantic Canada which has costs in line with the standards which had been set. Those negotiations will certainly be undertaken.