

unfair to Canadians, and which provides to the United States far more in the way of benefits than it provides to Canada. With that as a background it is important to learn some lessons, to draw some conclusions out of that process which tell us that Members of Parliament, individual Members of Parliament and those who have developed expertise as part of the standing committee, could and should be deeply involved in any further steps that are taken with respect to this trade deal. It is for this reason that this whole set of amendments has been brought before the House.

I will very quickly indicate the different areas with which the motions deal. Motion No. 30 suggests that the appointment of the chairman of the procurement review board should be an appointment which is subject to the approval of the appropriate Commons committee.

Motion No. 32 deals with the powers, duties and functions of the procurement review board which is a very important board within the Bill. Yet the regulations which establish how this board will operate are set forth as being very much the controlled purview of the Cabinet itself. Again, it seems to me that it makes eminent good sense in this period of parliamentary reform for those regulations to be subject to review and approval by the appropriate parliamentary committee.

• (1120)

Motion No. 38 is an attempt to see to it that the Canadian International Import Tribunal reports not only to Cabinet and to a Minister, but to a Commons committee with respect to the questions of whether, as a result of tariff reductions, U.S. imports are causing serious injury to Canadian producers. I think that industries and workers have to be able to petition the tribunal directly when they experience injury resulting from U.S. competition. That is not a part of the Bill either, but at least in this context there will be a parliamentary committee which will play an important role in overseeing the work of the Canadian International Import Tribunal. That will give a possibility for testimony from groups outside the bureaucracy and outside the Cabinet itself.

Motion No. 41 would, in the same way, increase the role that a parliamentary committee would have by giving it the necessity to approve the establishment of dispute settlement panels and committees, and their operation within the agreement itself.

Motion No. 43 would give the same committee the chance to review and approve the appointment of the secretary of the Canadian secretariat that will administer the dispute settlement panels and committees. Again, this is a crucial role that is going to be played within the agreement which has been signed, if it goes ahead, and this parliamentary committee should be able to have some say in this appointment.

Motion No. 44 deals with the question of regulations with respect to a number of powers of the dispute settlement panels and committees established by the Cabinet and states that these too must be subject to approval by the appropriate parliamentary committee.

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Motion No. 50 makes the same point with respect to regulations regarding agricultural standards which are related to the standards harmonization provisions of the agricultural chapter of the agreement.

Finally, Motions Nos. 56 and 58 follow the same direction. Motion No. 56 gives the appropriate parliamentary committee the capacity to approve and review decisions regarding the manner in which the CRTC should interpret the television retransmission provisions of the agreement, which is Article 2006. Motion No. 58 gives that same committee power to approve and review the question of regulations defining distance signals and local signals for the purpose of copyright payment on television retransmissions.

Throughout this entire set of amendments there is an attempt to see to it that instead of Cabinet autocracy we recognize the principle of parliamentary democracy through its various committees. We see to it that these committees have the opportunity to carefully review and hear testimony from people about regulations and appointments with respect to this agreement, and consequently we give the Member of Parliament the chance to speak out with reference to these very important decisions which otherwise will be subject only to discussion and debate within the cabinet room itself.

I suspect that the Orders in Council which establish these various regulations, appointments, and committees, will not be subject to any detailed scrutiny from the Cabinet, but will simply be taken through in some very rushed manner without that scrutiny. These committees will permit scrutiny. They will permit the input of Members of Parliament. They will make for a much more democratic system should this agreement ultimately go forward.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this occasion to speak to this grouping of amendments. Last Thursday in speaking to a similar set of proposals concerning the increasing power of Cabinet and the expansion of the whole authority of the executive branch, I took note of the increasing trend of executive federalism and the attempt to make the decisions of government less and less accountable. The general tenor of these amendments further demonstrates how the trade agreement will distance and separate the question of accountability and the ability of elected Members trying to hold to account the decisions of Government on this issue more limited.

This morning I want to talk to Motion No. 41. Primarily it deals with the dispute settlement panel and the proposal that is in the Bill. In many ways this is the heart of the agreement. It was certainly put forward by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) as being the primary reason for undertaking a negotiation with the United States.

In 1987 the Prime Minister stated: "Our highest priority is to have an agreement that ends the threat to Canadian industry from U.S. protectionists who harass and restrict our