

Supply

open. It has been discussed and debated in this House. Indeed, we are having another meeting tomorrow to discuss this issue. I think that is proper and sensible. I have never regarded sitting down and discussing a problem with somebody else as a giveaway or sign of weakness. I think it is a sign of maturity in this Government.

Mr. Caldwell: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister the same question I asked the Hon. Member who proposed this motion. It concerns the statement made by the President of the NDP, Marion Dewar, who indicated that a nation's economy must stop being based on the illusion that it is possible for every nation to export more than it imports. It does not add up. Does the Minister agree with that statement? Does it mean that Canada should not worry about exporting lumber and simply use it to build our own homes? As well, what would happen if we simply disregarded exports and simply imported what we needed? Would our economy suffer very much?

Mr. Kelleher: Implicit in that statement is a suggestion that Canada should indeed become fortress Canada. No country in the world can survive that way. Canada exports almost one-third of its GNP. No other country in the world except West Germany exports as much of their GNP as we do. That is why we have a standard of living almost second to none. We are an exporting nation. We have to export more than we import. If we fail to do that it will cost us thousands and thousands of jobs. Perhaps Members opposite do not care about that, but this Government does. We intend to create jobs for Canadians through trade.

Mr. O'Neil: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Minister on his remarks and for his initiative on this important issue. It is interesting to see the two socialist Parties, appropriately seated on my left, now supporting the trade agreement with the U.S. In the first part of this debate the NDP and Liberals were against jobs for Canadians resulting from trade with the Americans. They would rather see the people of Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada unemployed than working in factories which make products to be sold to the U.S. All this because of their dogma. These people would rather see Canadians out of work than selling products to the Americans.

The people of Nova Scotia are very pleased with the initiatives of this Government which is moving to protect the sale of fish products to the U.S., as well as the important forest industry in Nova Scotia where we export so much to the U.S. We in the Conservative Party want to keep Atlantic Canadians working. We prefer to have them employed in factories than sitting home drawing benefits from social programs.

I would like the Minister to comment on whether we have rights under the GATT and why we do not take this issue to the GATT?

Mr. Kelleher: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member is quite correct. Canada does have rights under the GATT and we are exploring those rights at this time. If indeed we cannot resolve this problem with our American neighbours and they take

some action that we consider harmful to our interests, then of course we would explore very carefully our rights to take action under the GATT.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, my question to the Minister concerns the proposal to have envoys discuss the matter of softwood lumber between Canada and the U.S. I would like to know the names of the provincial Ministers responsible for forests from those provinces involved in the agreement to have envoys on this issue. Will the Minister expand on exactly what will be included in the discussions between the Envoys? Does it include any limits on exports or anything related to export price? Will he name the Ministers and the provinces that have been involved in this proposal and exactly the nature of those discussions between the envoys?

● (1230)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Minister of International Trade has 30 seconds.

Mr. Kelleher: Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult to expect a politician to say anything in 30 seconds. All I can tell you is that on Monday the provinces were involved in discussions with us on this matter. Last evening I sent telegrams to the various Ministers of Forestry and Trade. We will be discussing this further in Washington tomorrow, when I will be getting back to the Ministers of the relevant provinces. At that time we hope to have some resolution to the mandate and who the envoys might be.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The period for questions and comments is terminated. Debate.

Mr. Jim Fulton (Skeena): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have an opportunity to participate in this debate. Contrary to what the Minister for International Trade (Mr. Kelleher) would have Canadians believe, the only debates in the House on the issue of lumber and the forest industry since September, 1984, have been started by the New Democratic Party and never by the Government or the Official Opposition.

The fact that the Minister said that no countervail has been filed indicates that he is not completely aware of everything that is going on. In fact, the International Trade Commission and the Commerce Department have agreed that the clock started running yesterday in terms of the countervail action being taken in the United States against Canadian softwood. Technically, the countervail is already in process.

The Minister indicated that he has been in touch with the provinces regarding the appointment of envoys and what will be substantively discussed between the two envoys. However, it seems to fly in the face of what has really gone on in terms of this issue.

We learned today that the forest companies in the United States are proposing a \$53.65 U.S. countervail duty per thousand board feet against Canadian SPF. My friend, the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis), pointed