

*Softwood Lumber Products Export Charge Act*

Mr. Speaker, sovereignty is something that is most important to my fellow citizens and to myself. I would like to state, first, that I am a Canadian by adoption and not by birth. I came to this country when I was 16. That was my choice. After coming here, I decided to stay and to make this my country. I am proud of it. Today, when we see what a foreign government is allowed to do, and it is a foreign country even though we are friends of the United States! Are we to give away everything because we are friends? Or will we defend our own rights, Mr. Speaker? There is the whole question.

Today, we let the United States interfere in our own affairs, and require us to levy taxes. If tomorrow morning the United States—they did that before—decide they are against unemployment insurance coverage for our fishermen, are we going to stop paying UI benefits to our Atlantic fishermen during our Canadian winter? If the United States decide they are against unemployment insurance being paid during maternity leave, are we going to stop paying UI benefits during maternity leaves just because the Americans want us to do so? If the Americans decide they are against medicare in Canada, are we going to do away with medicare? If the Americans decide they are against our offering preferential interest rates on small business loans, are we going to abolish that preferential interest rate? That, Mr. Speaker, is the whole question. That is what this is all about, sovereignty. Of course, the Hon. Member said earlier today that, had we not accepted the agreement, the American Government would have levied a surtax and then the whole Canadian industry would have been penalized. Come now: that is not a sound argument. Now, every time the Americans say they will force a tax upon us, we will respond by saying we will levy it ourselves. If sovereignty is not at stake, what is?

Members say we are exaggerating, they say Liberals have no solutions. Of course we have a solution, Mr. Speaker. There is an international tribunal dealing with those matters. We should fight to the end to keep our sovereign rights as a sovereign nation. And I think that the Liberals have proved it in the past. We stood our ground and we got what we wanted, whereas in this case, the Conservative Government is slowly selling out the country.

Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Council of Forest Industries has calculated that this tax will eventually bring about the loss of some 10 to 20 per cent of present Canadian production, which will mean \$600 million in 1987, and some 15,000 to 17,000 jobs. These include 6,000 jobs in sawing and sawmilling and 11,000 jobs in related and support industries.

Mr. Speaker, these are not our projections but those of the Canadian Council of Forest Industries, which is, by any standard, an important organization in this area.

According to Mr. Bob Rivard of the Canadian Lumbermen's Association, our lumber production could decline by as much as 25 percent in 1987.

As for Widman Management Ltd. of Vancouver, British Columbia, they predict that about forty sawmills will be forced to shut down.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, we will not only lose our sovereignty but also drive an industry close to bankruptcy. That is what this Bill is about and the Conservative Government is so embarrassed that it will not even allow its own Members to rise and speak on the issue. We may be wrong, but if we are, why do you not stand up and say so and try to explain to the Canadian people why you are doing this, rather than keep silent, as you have been doing since this morning—and all day yesterday, as far as I can see. Are there only Liberals and New Democrats to rise and speak for Canadian sovereignty?

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, if the Tory Members think that such an agreement does not jeopardize our Canadian sovereignty, they should, the 210 of them, rise one after the other and say so. There is no point in introducing a closure motion to pass such a Bill. They have an absolute majority. It is incredible that in a democratic system such steps are taken and it is unfortunate that the parliamentary reform has now become a joke. How can we refer to parliamentary reform, how can we suggest that a Member has a role to play if he is prevented from speaking in the House or in committee for any reason? This morning, two members of the Opposition and four Tory Members showed up. They could have accepted and discussed the motion and if they disagreed, they could have voted against and the motion would have been rejected. However, they decided to leave and since there was no quorum, the motion was not even discussed.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, it is clear that the Government has no direction and no plan; it is only trying to sell out Canada.

• (1230)

[English]

**Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—Walkerville):** Mr. Speaker, Bill C-37 is derived from a trade issue. Of course, this issue lies within the broader and more controversial question of free trade with the United States and the concern this has brought to many of us about future implications of the free trade negotiations on Canadian sovereignty.

I need not remind the House of the history of the legislation with which we are dealing today. The Canadian softwood lumber industry has for some time competed effectively in the American market by virtue of its efficiency and adaptability. This should warn us about the Americans' future tendency to examine all of our effectively competing industries to find excuses, explaining why Canadian industries have in their own markets competed so effectively.

The history of this controversy is that the Americans reached the conclusion that Canadian softwood lumber was being subsidized by low stumpage fees. However, in 1983 the issue was fought when an attempt was made to impose a countervailing duty and we won. We need not deal with the story of bluster, threat and subsequent surrender that is the