

Supply

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I found the response of the Minister of International Trade (Mr. Kelleher) to this motion to be totally unsatisfactory. The Minister talks about naive presumptions on the part of the Opposition. Yet, during the course of his comments he conveniently forgot that it is none other than the President of the United States who said, with respect to the Canadian softwood lumber problem, in his letter dated May 8, but received only yesterday: "I intend to press for an expedited resolution to this problem independent of the comprehensive negotiations. If this cannot be achieved through bilateral negotiations then I will take such action as may be necessary to resolve this problem consistent with U.S. law".

That is not an idle statement of interest by the President to the U.S. lumber industry. That is not an idle comment that he shares their concerns or empathizes with their frustration or that he understands some of the things they are talking about. That is a clear commitment: "If this cannot be achieved through bilateral negotiations then I will take such action as may be necessary to resolve this problem consistent with U.S. law".

This motion intends to place some resolve in the backbone of the Government. It even assists the Canadian administration because it allows it at least to go to the United States and play the same game south of the border as is being played with our negotiators. If the Government does not have intestinal fortitude, in the Minister's words, and does not have the basic understanding of the tough and rough poker game which is being played, to talk tough at the table, then at least carry to the U.S. administration the feelings of the Canadian Parliament and Members of that Parliament on both sides of the House in all three Parties.

I cannot believe that there are members on the Government side from the Province of British Columbia who are prepared to put a \$3 billion industry and tens of thousands of jobs on the line in the hands of a special set of envoys. The last time we used envoys it was on acid rain and we all know the result. The U.S. President admitted that bird droppings do not cause acid rain. He has not yet quite determined what does.

● (1220)

I cannot believe we are prepared to make a separate deal on lumber which will sell our people short in order just to sit at the table of free trade talks which are not guaranteed to be successful. Is this Government determined to lose the vital softwood lumber industry of British Columbia and elsewhere as it symbolically lost the Provinces of P.E.I. and Newfoundland when it put out its free trade propaganda kit? Is that the kind of competent negotiations we are going to see?

Mr. Kelleher: Mr. Speaker, one need only look at the record of this Government to realize that it will never sell Canada short. Never will this Government sell short the lumber interests of British Columbia or any other province. We have been acting like rational people. When there is a problem we

sit down and try to resolve it by discussing it with our neighbour and biggest trading partner. Surely there is nothing whatsoever wrong with that. I just do not understand the attitude of Members opposite. They do not want to sit down and discuss a problem like civilized human beings.

I would like to point out again that they do not seem to understand the import of this resolution. It is naive. If we expect for one moment that the Americans will withdraw their right to impose countervailing duties such as those imposed to date, then surely they are going to say in return, if they even considered the question seriously, "are you prepared to withdraw yours"? I ask the Hon. Member and others opposite, are they prepared for the next several years while discussions continue to withdraw our right of imposing countervailing duties against American goods which might be dumped in this country? Who in fact is selling the people of Canada short? It is certainly not Members of this Party. It is Members opposite, not this Government. We will not treat Canadians that way.

Mr. Tobin: Supplementary.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have five questioners. A very short supplementary, then I will recognize the Hon. Member for Essex—Kent (Mr. Caldwell), the Hon. Member for Cape Breton Highlands—Canso (Mr. O'Neil), the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton), the Hon. Member for Kamloops—Shuswap (Mr. Riis), and I will try and get the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon) in. Please use discretion.

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, the Minister's bombast and rhetoric will not hide the fact he is dragging a red herring across the floor of this House. The Government of Canada is not entering into an agreement to drop our right to impose countervailing duties if the Americans drop their right to do so. What the Government is entering into now is a bilateral negotiation by appointing trade envoys. The U.S. administration said to Canada that the price of a free trade discussion, not an agreement, is a deal on lumber. That is what is happening. The U.S. administration has singled out one particular industry, the softwood lumber industry, and said, we have to have a deal. The way we are going to get that deal is to name envoys. We are going to do a backroom political deal and you are going to pay before the talks start. The Minister knows he sold out the people of British Columbia and elsewhere who are involved in the softwood lumber industry. He has done it in the same way he gave away Newfoundland and P.E.I. on the map of Canada.

Mr. Kelleher: Mr. Speaker, again the Hon. Member has difficulty listening to me, for whatever reason. However, I will not get into that. We are not entering into negotiations with the Americans on lumber. This is a process we agreed to last December, long before the two countries ever agreed to the commencement of trade negotiations between our two countries on a bilateral basis. We have been meeting regularly since last December. Everyone knows that. It has been quite