

Ms. Copps: I am responding to questions and comments, Mr. Speaker. That is what I call one parachute propping up another parachute, a Windsor parachute propping up a Hamilton parachute and they are both destined for a fall. Nonetheless, I would like to respond to the question and comment raised by my colleague, the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata).

Government Members have been casting aspersions on why I should be interested in the softwood lumber issue. I am interested not only because it is an issue of national sovereignty but also because what happens in the lumber industry portends very ill for what will happen in other industries in Canada. Being from a riding which is the most industrialized riding in Canada which depends upon the steel industry for bread and butter—

Mr. Gustafson: And foreign investment.

Ms. Copps: Foreign investment? Canadian made and Canadian built steel industry is the best in the world. We do not need foreign investments. Look to the south to talk about lack of competition.

In the steel industry, we are watching what is happening very closely in the lumber industry. We are concerned that if the Canadian Government is prepared to put up the lumber industry on the chopping block, what resource based industry will be next? We are very concerned about saving Canadian jobs in the steel industry in Hamilton.

• (1710)

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, seeing that no other Hon. Members are rising to ask a question of the Hon. Member for Hamilton East, I will take this opportunity to put a question to her. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the chief trade negotiator, Mr. Reisman, have indicated that a draft comprehensive agreement will likely be ready some time in the fall, notwithstanding the fact that there has not been a national debate of any significance on the subject of free trade. There was a one-day debate in the House of Commons but there was no general national cost benefit study. I would like the Hon. Member for Hamilton East to comment on the impending draft agreement and what she perceives to be the likely result of the negotiations that are taking place.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata) will no doubt recall that the press and the Opposition had to apply under freedom of information for the background documentation on what was happening in free trade discussions. In fact, my colleague, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy), brought a whole stack of documents received through application to freedom of information, and we in the Liberal caucus thought we would finally have a chance to look at the Government's agenda for free trade discussions. Lo and behold, to our great chagrin, when we opened up this package of documents, which stood about a foot high, we found that every second page was censored because the Government does not even trust

Softwood Lumber Products Export Charge Act

the Parliament of Canada to deal with one of the most serious questions facing it that has been launched by the Government, the sell-out of the country.

We did not see the cost benefit analysis and we did not get the full story even in the documentation we received through freedom of information. It is quite clear that the Prime Minister wants to negotiate a cosy little deal, possibly have the House rise at the end of July and not sit until October so he can come out with trumpet and much fanfare in September or October with this terrific deal. We Canadians will be paying in consequence through lost jobs, lost sovereignty and lost integrity for many years.

We want to fight that and in order to fight it, we need to have all the facts on the table, but we are not getting the facts. The facts we are getting like the legislation before us, Bill C-37, simply show us that what is coming in free trade for Canada does not bode well for Canadian citizens.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my speech will devote itself to this Bill because it is a very important Bill which Canada should look at carefully. The precedent which has been set in this case is a sad and unfortunate one which the country should consider carefully. There are still many aspects of what is taking place in these negotiations that must be treated in a serious manner and not simply used for partisan purposes.

To begin, I must say that I am disappointed that while debating a Bill as important, controversial and full of ramifications for the sovereignty of the country as this one before us, we have not heard speeches from either of the Ministers who have been so vociferous in defending the Bill during Question Period, the Minister for International Trade (Miss Carney) and the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark). I must say as well that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), who took his share of the defence of this indefensible set of actions, is someone, I believe, who should speak to us to explain as we wind up our consideration of this piece of legislation why it is that the surrender was made.

This is a surrender which affects a great many people. It affects people right across the country. In northern Ontario, 90 per cent of all wood cut is softwood and 6,000 people are directly employed in the industry. In British Columbia, over 40,000 people are employed in this industry. In Alberta, over 5,000 people are employed by 220 lumber companies. One would not perhaps think of Saskatchewan as a crucial contributor, but one nevertheless finds that there are over 8,500 people there directly affected by this Bill. In Manitoba, there are close to 13,000 affected by it. In Ontario itself, something like 19,500 people in total are affected and in Quebec, over 27,000 people are affected. New Brunswick employs 3,500 people in the industry, Nova Scotia employs close to 1,900 people in the industry, and even in Prince Edward Island, something like 140 people are employed in the industry. In Newfoundland, over 11,000 people are directly employed in forestry jobs.