

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

It is becoming abundantly clear, not only to fishermen but to all Canadians, that the Conservative Government has outlived its usefulness.

Of course, we are honoured to have the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans here at the moment. While I am on the subject of the fishery, and because he and his colleague, the Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie), have been rattling their cages, disputing what I said about Atlantic processing, let me point out a couple of facts to both Ministers. Both have been less than forthcoming on the question of whether or not the Atlantic fish processing sector is threatened by the trade agreement. The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans said in the House on August 19 that I "untruthfully attempted to arouse the fishermen", when I said in Carbonear, Newfoundland, that the trade deal did in fact threaten the fish processing industry. The Minister for International Trade went even further and issued a press release attacking my statement.

The Minister of Fisheries and Oceans then told the House that Friday that the free trade agreement in no way jeopardizes the processing regulations, and that the President's statement confirms not only that the free trade agreement grandfathers existing Atlantic processing regulations, but that the U.S. Administration will not take these regulations before the GATT. I would refer to page 18570 of *Hansard* to substantiate those words.

The Minister has not read Article 1205 of the agreement which specifically states that the United States retains its GATT remedies. The Minister for International Trade stated in his press release that "Mr. Turner is wrong when he says that Atlantic fish processing is threatened by the free trade agreement".

● (1720)

Before I go on, Mr. Speaker, I should point out to both Ministers that their quarrel is not with me. Their quarrel is with the President of the United States and the U.S. Congress. All I am doing, and I thought I was doing it for the benefit of both Ministers, is quoting the President's statement to Congress and the American implementing legislation, the legislation implementing the trade deal that both these Ministers say they understand and support, and may even by now have read.

The President does not agree with the Ministers. While in his statement he acknowledges that:

"Article 1203(c) of the agreement "grandfathers" from the obligations of the agreement various specified statutes of eastern Canadian provinces."

He goes on to say, and this is all on page 70:

"In the event that regulations pursuant to these authorities should be issued so as to apply those authorities to control the export of unprocessed fish, Section 304(e) of the implementing Bill would require the President to take one or more of the actions specified in that section . . ."

In other words, and I want to make this clear to the Minister so he understands, the Acts themselves are grandfathered, but that does not mean much because if we ever use those Acts to protect our processors—and the same thing applies even more

clearly on the West Coast—the full weight of the U.S. Government will come down on our fishery. Section 304(e) of the implementing legislation tells the President what he must do:

"Within 30 days of the application by Canada of export controls on unprocessed fish under statutes exempted from the agreement under Article 1203, or the application of landing requirements for fish caught in Canadian waters, the President shall take appropriate action to enforce U.S. rights under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade that are retained in Article 1205 of the agreement;"

In addition:

"In enforcing the United States rights referred to in paragraph (1), the President has discretion to:

Bring a challenge to the offending Canadian practices before the GATT,

Retaliate against such offending practices;

Seek resolution directly with Canada;

Refer the matter for dispute resolution to the Canadian-United States Trade Commission; or

Take other action that the President considers appropriate to enforce such United States rights."

Could anything be clearer, Mr. Speaker? The President has virtually unfettered options under that legislation to retaliate at any time against an attempt by Canada to protect its processing on either coast. I suggest the two Ministers, first, read the President's statement and, second, read the American legislation and, third, stop trying to mislead Canadian fishermen and Canadians in general.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, nothing, absolutely nothing has changed in the American approach to our Canadian exporters. The Americans keep the same provisions regarding countervail, quotas, antidumping and surcharges as they had before this agreement was signed by the Prime Minister.

Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Government itself admits that it did not get what it wanted in this Agreement, namely guaranteed access to the American market. So, what is absolutely incomprehensible and totally unacceptable for all Canadians is that this Government, despite all that, continued these negotiations and sold out our interests, without ever reaching its own objectives.

The American market remains as protectionist and as protected as ever. Their lumber industry will continue to invoke protectionist legislation every time it feels threatened. The same goes for the steel industry, potash, fisheries and agriculture. Why? Because this Government did not have the courage or the honesty to go before the Canadian people with a failure. Neither did this Prime Minister have the courage, the honesty and the integrity to tell Canadians, "Well, we really tried to reach an agreement, but it didn't work." No, the Prime Minister could not say that. He could not be honest with Canadians, because he had invested too much political capital in this agreement. It was to be any agreement at any price. He had invested too much capital to be able to tell his fellow citizens, Canadians across the country, the truth.