

*Softwood Lumber*

softwood lumber dispute before and we probably would have won it again. Undoubtedly we would have.

The federal government's position was motivated by a desire to avoid any action that might jeopardize the free trade negotiations. This government sold the soul of Canada in order to get a free trade agreement. It said it was going to give us great access to the American markets and it was going to be the greatest thing since sliced bread.

Look at the shape the country is in today. Look how many industries are crossing the border into the United States. This country has to stand up on its own feet and fight in a united way.

We cannot be harassed every time the Americans have an election. I say to them that if they have not any more originality than to bring forward an election campaign in the form of policies, then as the leading democracy in this world, it is time they were looking at their inner souls instead of picking on their next door neighbour in the manner in which they are.

Although Liberals in the forest industry argued for the elimination of the memorandum of understanding on softwood lumber, which should never have been signed by the government for a number of years, given that this is a presidential election period, the timing of the termination could not have been worse.

We have been demanding that this memorandum of understanding be cancelled ever since it came into operation on the first day of 1987. The government waited until election year, and now it is tied up in the domestic politics of the United States. That is bad timing.

The U.S. department of commerce has absolutely no grounds for this decision which is politically motivated and seriously undermines the spirit of the free trade agreement. Some people say: "You should not talk about the spirit of the free trade agreement. You should not talk about the problems surrounding it." Why should we not? It is here. It is reality. We have to talk about it.

In response to this unfair ruling the Canadian ambassador to the United States, Derek Burney, accused U.S. officials of a tortured attempt to manipulate the facts in order to maintain a pre-ordained result.

The Prime Minister himself went into a lashing of the United States on it and then ended up by saying he was aiming at lower officials and not the President. Give me a break. Who is leading the United States?

This is getting so silly. Here we are in a serious situation in our trade negotiations, in our trade relations with the United States and we are blaming junior officials.

Just last Friday, Stone Consolidated, head office in Chicago, announced the closure of its mill at Braeside in my riding in the Ottawa valley. Ironically, when was that announcement made? The announcement of the closure of the mill at Braeside was made at three o'clock last Friday afternoon.

When did the Americans announce the 14.48 per cent duty on Canadian softwood lumber? It was at 12 o'clock noon. The timing leaves a big question mark in my mind as to what is going on and who knows what is going on around here ahead of time. The U.S. commerce department came forward with that announcement and put 140 people out of work, but that is only part of it.

Our members from northern Ontario have spoken here tonight. I know what they have been going through. I have crossed northern Ontario with them. I have seen those one industry towns.

I have seen in my own riding in a village of 1,200 or 1,400 people, the welfare rolls increased by 2,000 per cent in one year. Why? Because the lumber industry was the real base of the economy of that community. When it went down, the community was left without work for its people. As a result, through time their unemployment insurance runs out. Where do they go? They go to the municipalities for welfare.

The issue before us tonight on trading relations with the United States is affecting far more governments in this country than this government. The problem has been inflicted on the provinces because the provinces have to look after the municipalities. The problem of unemployment in the forest industry across this country has been inflicted on the municipalities and the taxpayers in those communities. It is unfair. It shows how ill-conceived moves can disrupt the entire lives of tens and hundreds of thousands of people across this country.