

Government Orders

with the committee prior to each such decision would require frequent meetings with the committee on a plethora of details and highly technical issues. Moreover, the agenda of the council is often fixed very shortly before its meeting and a prior consultation requirement would hamstring Canada's ability to respond quickly and flexibly to new developments in a manner that takes account of the position of other World Trade Organization members and that effectively advances Canadian interests.

The reporting requirement in paragraphs 2.2 to 2.4 is also unworkable and would have significant resource implications. Some of the information requested is contained in the GATT reports. Other information is restricted under GATT practice and therefore its public release is not permitted. Canada is currently working in the World Trade Organization preparatory committee to have such documents derestricted on a more expedited timetable. These World Trade Organization reports and documents could be made available to a committee of the House.

Finally, we also recommend the rejection of Motion No. 7 because the reporting requirement is onerous and would entail significant resource implications. The minister could in any case report on ongoing negotiations from time to time as appropriate or as requested by a committee.

My colleagues from the New Democratic Party suggest that we introduce an amendment that would deal with the social clause. This suggestion is too late to even be considered. Our answer to that would be that the best social clause this or any other government could offer would be a job.

To that extent, I would suggest that Motions Nos. 1, 2, 6 and 7 all be rejected.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say very briefly that we are stressing in this motion the necessity for the federal government to consult provinces and establish mechanisms before taking position in sectors which are, formally and constitutionally, within provincial jurisdiction.

In agriculture, for example, we have seen during the last negotiations the impact that it could have on the marketing of eggs, poultry and other products. We believe that the federal should not only consult the provinces but also create a formal mechanism so that, in sectors such as agriculture, culture, and natural resources, provinces are not only consulted but have a say on the position taken by Canada in this international forum.

This supposes that negotiations will go on with the provinces. We are told that provinces will be fully consulted; we fail to see how the government can oppose the amendment we are proposing.

Let us take the American government, for instance. Liberals are of the opinion, and so am I, that the American federation is much more centralized than Canada. Yet, in Part E of the Statement of Administrative Action, the American equivalent of Bill C-57, which deals with the Uruguay Round Agreement Act, sections 102B and 102C provide that the US federal government must not only inform but establish a process to consult the states regarding the general implementation of the Uruguay Round as well as the positions to be adopted during the settlement of commercial disputes.

• (1225)

In the case of lumber, for example, Quebec had to bear the burden of tariffs which were in no way warranted. The problem existed only in British Columbia. Yet Quebec had to pay the price although, strangely enough, New Brunswick was exempt. Why two different treatments, one for Quebec and one for New Brunswick, when the problem was in British Columbia?

If there was a compulsory system like the one we propose, first, we would not come to a point where some provinces, like Quebec, are penalized. Second, the government would have to stop pretending that it is consulting provinces, because there would be mandatory consulting mechanisms which would have to produce results. That means that the position of Canada would be arrived at after due consideration of the powers granted to provinces by the Constitution of Canada.

We are only asking that the government abide by the Constitution and recognize provincial jurisdictions at the international level. We are asking for an extension of the rights of the provinces to the international level in the area of trade agreements and, as long as Quebec remains in confederation, we want Canada to respect provincial rights. If the United States can do it, what prevents Canada from doing the same?

These are the comments I wanted to make, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. members: Question

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The question is on Motion No. 1, standing in the name of Mrs. Debien.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Some hon. members: No.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): All those in favour will please say yea.