

Customs Tariff

so, not only at the expense of Canadian industry and Canadian citizens, but at the expense of citizens in a third country. Canada makes special arrangements for tariff concessions to developing and Third World countries, but we do it directly. There is no going behind anyone's back, no behind the scenes negotiations between Washington and Ottawa. I do not believe this country should be party to that kind of nonsense.

• (1250)

I am a very strong believer in the principle enunciated by a world famous historical figure who said that "labour is prior and superior to capital. Without labour, capital cannot function". Yet when we, not only allow this kind of exploitation by multinational corporations, some of whom have branch plants in Canada, but aid and abet it, we are not deserving of very much credibility in the eyes of the rest of the world, particularly the under developed and developing nations.

Surely there is not a single Canadian who would not be willing to pay more for a product from Mexico produced at a labour cost of \$3 or \$4 or \$5 an hour instead of 65 cents an hour. I do not know of any self-respecting Canadian who calls himself civilized or Christian who would be in favour of saving a few pennies at the expense of a fellow human being in a country like Mexico.

Neither should the Cabinet have the authority to do these things by itself. It should have to present a Bill to Parliament every time it wants to make changes. Every time it wants to resort to something like this, it should be subject to public scrutiny and examination. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), at the First Ministers' Conference, said he did not believe in government by committee. We have too darn much government by committee in this country as it is, and have had for many years. That committee is called the Cabinet, the Governor in Council, that does things that in many other countries have to come before a legislature. Why should we broaden even more the power that the Governor in Council has?

This is not a routine regulation or a simple change in procedure. This is an attempt to pacify and satisfy the U.S. Government and accept goods from them, under our law, which they consider made in the U.S.A. The fact that this stuff is made in Mexico by an American company paying 65 cents an hour does not qualify it as made in the U.S.A. Whatever deal Mexico has made with the U.S. is Mexico's business. We should not be party to this kind of economic imperialism. I find it disgraceful that Canada would sit back and make changes in its law that would allow this to happen. I find it incredible.

I would be willing to give my consent to have the Minister speak a second time on this motion. If other Members agree, he can get up and tell us what the final agreement contains that makes this amendment unnecessary.

Mr. Hockin: It will be there.

Mr. Rodriguez: When?

Mr. Benjamin: If he cannot give us the whole thing, and we will be lucky to get it by December 7, he can fish out that paragraph or two paragraphs or whatever it is to prove to us that what he says about this amendment is true. Until he can do that, we consider it a most necessary amendment and we will debate it and many others because this Bill goes beyond simply harmonizing our tariff arrangements with the rest of the world. The main reason for the Bill, and the reason the Government feels it should be passed as quickly as possible, is that it will fit in with the requirements of the U.S. administration.

We have here another example of Canadian law being made in Washington, not in Ottawa. This is supine acquiescence by the Government. We have seen this in its predecessors as well. When the Americans holler, jump, and my friends across the way ask: how high?

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the amendment will prove acceptable to the majority of the House.

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I want to address this amendment proposed by the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Cassidy).

[*Translation*]

and say that the Liberal Caucus and the Liberal Party are very concerned about the fact that the Government, which has yet to table the final text of the Agreement, would have us adopt, more or less sight unseen, a proposal that would very substantially change the way Canadians trade or do business with the rest of the world.

The amendment before the House seeks to exclude from this market certain foreign products, products that are manufactured in Mexico.

[*English*]

I want to read Clause 15 very carefully. It says:

15(1) For the purposes of this Act, goods originate in a country if the whole of the value of the goods is produced in that country.

(2) The Governor in Council may make regulations.

(a) deeming goods, the whole or a portion of the value of which is produced outside a country, to originate in that country for the purposes of this Act;—

In simple terms, that means that the Americans could have products made wholly or in part in Mexico, declare them to be American products, and bring them into Canada under a so-called free trade agreement. I invite the Minister to clarify that clause of the Bill because it addresses the rule of origin and our preoccupations with respect to clarifying the Bill.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the areas covered by a trade agreement between two countries are usually discussed beforehand and submitted for serious debate. The Government keeps telling us we should accept, without argument, the Mulroney-Reagan proposal for free trade between . . .