

Financial Administration Act

The President of the Canadian Manufacturers Association has said that it is simply a fact that as we ask our industries to compete toe to toe with American industries we in Canada are obviously forced to create the same conditions in Canada that exist in the U.S., whether the unemployment insurance scheme, workers' compensation, the cost of government, the level of taxation or whatever.

The Canada West Foundation says that free trade between our two countries will inevitably lead to wages being equalized between Canada and the United States and that this will occur since the high-cost producer will not be able to compete against a lower-cost producer if goods are traded freely.

Nine U.S. states have no minimum wage. In Texas the minimum wage is \$1.40 Canadian an hour. I will give you a graphic example of what happens when some tariffs are taken down. Ten years ago there was a protective tariff on home appliances made in Canada. Fridges, stoves, percolators and all those kinds of things were made in little GE and other plants in Canada. When the tariff was in place, 80 per cent of home appliances purchased in Canada were made in Canada. The tariff was taken away and 10 years later 80 per cent of the home appliances purchased in Canada are made in the United States in states like Texas where the minimum wage is \$1.40 an hour.

Canadians ask what this means for them. We know that our social programs are threatened. Medicare is clearly threatened. I have yet to hear a single Member from the government side, including the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp), give a speech nailing down point blank that they will not be affected. The Government will not put up speakers like that on social programs; unemployment insurance, Canada pension, medicare, or workers compensation.

We know that 36 million Americans do not have any health insurance of any kind. I will not even talk about the Maquiladora zone between Texas and Mexico where workers are paid 65 cents an hour. They produce commodities, put a U.S. label on them, and bring them into the Canadian market. Companies making widgets in Canada will pay \$8 an hour or \$7 an hour but will have to compete against a widget producer in Texas who only pays \$1.40 an hour and does not have to pay for any health benefits, lay-offs, or anything else.

If Canadians think for one moment that the one-fifth of goods traded between Canada and the United States which have protective tariffs are going to survive, they are dreaming in Technicolor because the widget producers in the United States will make it almost impossible for those kinds of widgets to be produced in Canada.

Mr. McDermid: Total mythology.

Mr. Fulton: We always hear the Parliamentary Secretary saying it's mythology and the Minister for International Trade saying that all the Members of the Opposition are involved in deceit, untruth, and everything else. We will see, Mr. Speaker. We want an election. We are going to get an election and Canadians will throw the Progressive Conservatives out of office in this country for good.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of Labour): Mr. Speaker, since the ways and means motion was tabled on May 18, 1988, by the Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie), we have had more than 130 hours of debate, including more than 90 hours of testimony before the legislative committee by witnesses from practically all walks of life. I refer only to what transpired in Parliament, because I think it would be frivolous to include all the seminars, briefing sessions, press releases and other kinds of public debate we have had for over two years across this country. Mr. Speaker, it is time to stop this ridiculous farce designed by the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Turner) to obstruct debate. Canadians, Mr. Speaker, are sick and tired of the incredible ravings of the Opposition, and that is exactly what we have been hearing today.

[*English*]

There is more to it. It is also a question of honesty, especially when the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition is calling to let the people decide.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Minister will have nine minutes left after six o'clock. It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS— MOTIONS

[*English*]

FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION ACT

SUGGESTED REPEAL OF SECTION 17

The House resumed, from Monday, July 4, consideration of the motion of Mr. Redway:

That, in the opinion of this House, the Government should consider the advisability of repealing Section 17 of the Financial Administration Act and require that all remission of taxes, fees or penalties be submitted, each year, to Parliament for approval.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): When the motion was last before the House the Hon. Member for Edmonton West (Mr. Dorin) had the floor. I will recognize the Hon. Member for Calgary South (Mrs. Sparrow).

Mrs. Barbara Sparrow (Calgary South): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to be able to speak tonight on Motion 101 during Private Members' Hour. Section 17 of the Financial Administration Act and Section 101 of the Customs Tariff, which is the new tariff remission authority, allow the Government to respond quickly and selectively by Order in Council to rectify inequities and anomalies in the tax and tariff regimes. This important flexibility would be lost if these remedies had to await parliamentary debate and approval. Most remission orders provide relief for individuals or single companies in very specific and non-reoccurring circumstances and, as such, are not really appropriate matters for parliamentary consideration.