

### *Customs Tariff*

I am advised that there may be a minor typographical error in this document, but that the document itself represents the fundamentals of the agreement arrived at by the parties.

These elements are the agreed basis for the agreement and will be translated into a legal document, as agreed, in appropriate time frames by the negotiating teams.

The trade negotiators met late into last night and it is obvious that they failed to come to some finalized wording, and we are not talking about "minor" amendments. We are talking about negotiations which are ongoing and which could fundamentally alter the Elements of Agreement that we were shown two months ago. Obviously, the people of this country are very concerned about the agreement, regardless of whether they are for or against it. The Government has boasted how important it is. The people recognize it is important and we need a process, not a three, four, or five day debate prior to the Christmas recess, which the Government wants, a debate where the people of Canada will be excluded because they will not have seen the document, a debate which will occur after the committee has held hearings but without a final document in front of it.

When minor pieces of legislation are passed through the House of Commons, there is first reading one day, second reading later, a debate in the House, and then the Bill goes to committee. A finalized version of that Bill goes to committee, even if it is a minor piece of legislation. Witnesses are allowed to appear, pro and con, and then amendments can take place.

The Bill comes back to the House of Commons, as does this legislation that we are dealing with today, with other amendments being possible at report stage, as we call it. Following that there is third reading. Even for minor pieces of legislation, we are in the situation where the public has a final document, and they have the time to appear in front of a committee. In some cases even what we may call minor pieces of legislation have more witnesses appearing in front of a committee than is happening in the case of the trade deal.

I repeat, at least the witnesses who appear have a final document in front of them. The House of Commons at report stage, and later at third reading, is in a position to debate the merits of the legislation and to try to make amendments to it. Quite often ordinary legislation, some of it minor, some more important, takes a long time to get through the House of Commons. It is very seldom that we circumvent that route.

When it comes to the trade deal, the House of Commons cannot allow the Prime Minister to break his promise that we would have the finalized document and that that document would then go to the committee for study. The Prime Minister made a promise on October 5 and during later speeches he implied that it would be fulfilled some time during the month of October and there would be a final document. Therefore, when the committee travelled that final document would be in front of it.

October passed and we did not have a finalized document. November passed and we did not have a finalized document. It

is December and still there is no finalized document. Obviously, the committee which is scheduled to finish its work next Monday, will never have a finalized document in front of it. How can the Government, as it is doing at the present time, say that there will be a few days' debate just before the Christmas break, and it wants then to allow a vote on free trade so that our Prime Minister can go running off to Washington and say that he has the consent of the House of Commons? We do not do that for minor legislation. We certainly do not do it for major legislation. We will certainly not do it for the Prime Minister's trade package. The people of Canada deserve to have the information in front of them.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I would like to bring to the attention of the Hon. Member that there is such a thing as relevancy. I hope that he is returning to the relevant part of the Bill. The Hon. Member for Churchill (Mr. Murphy) has the floor.

**Mr. Murphy:** Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with a customs matter; the amendments before us deal with restricting the ability of Cabinet to act without the consent of Parliament.

● (1130)

In introducing these amendments for debate on Tuesday of this week, we stated that the intent of our amendments on Bill C-87 was to restrict the right of the Government to implement any part of its trade deal through any Order in Council mechanism. Therefore, the amendments which are before us are part of a deliberate strategy by the New Democratic Party caucus to ensure that the Government, which has already broken its word to the House of Commons with regard to the trade deal and in terms of us having a finalized document, does not use Bill C-87 and other pieces of legislation to get around full parliamentary approval or disapproval.

In talking about these amendments, I am talking about why we have presented them to the House of Commons. It was to make clear to members of the Government and members of the Opposition why we believe they are important. It is because we do not trust the Government when it comes to the trade deal. It is because we have already been told something by the Prime Minister in terms of our having the finalized document, which he has not been able to deliver. It is because we know that there are still ongoing negotiations on the basis of what the Americans want to do to improve the deal as far as they are concerned.

We have a Prime Minister who denies that the negotiations are going on, yet we know that they are happening. We also know that the House of Commons committee is in Halifax today and does not have the final document. In many cases the witnesses are wasting their time.

We want to make abundantly clear—and I know that my time has run out as far as this debate is concerned—that the procedure the Government is trying to foist on the House of Commons is unacceptable. We will certainly make sure, through debate on the motion, that we do not allow the