

Customs Tariff

the Hon. Member should read the Bill. Much of what is in it deals with the component parts necessary for the modernization of industry. At this moment the United States, as I said, is moving with a great deal of haste to try to put barriers in place which will enable it to improve the efficiency of its industry base. It will not be buying from us the products which we are currently in the process of manufacturing.

● (1640)

Mr. McDermid: Do you support it?

Mr. Deans: Do I support what?

Mr. McDermid: That with which we are dealing.

Mr. Deans: Of course not. The Government seems to be rushing headlong into an embrace with the administration of the United States to establish something called "free trade" which will inevitably destroy the industrial base in Canada. At the same time that administration is moving to protect its industrial base. It is about time that some members of the Tory caucus started to face reality. We cannot afford to alter the basic structure until we see what kind of retaliatory action the Government of the United States intends to implement with regard to protecting its industrial base. If any Members of the House doubt for one moment that in the major industrial areas of the United States there is some question about the imposition of quotas or other non-tariff barriers which will take the place of tariffs already in place, I urge them to go to Washington and sit down with their counterparts in the Congress to hear what they are saying.

Mr. McDermid: We know what they are saying.

Mr. Deans: I hear my colleague. If that is so, I anticipate that he will be on his feet momentarily to make a somewhat similar statement to the one I have made. This is not the time to eliminate tariffs. We should not have been sucked in in the negotiations. We should not have moved without careful consideration of the impact. Unfortunately that has been the case. That is what I am trying to get through to this motley crew of Conservative back-benchers, most of whom are not listening.

Mr. McDermid: One of them has more quality than the whole NDP.

Mr. Deans: I suppose the Hon. Member is speaking about himself.

Mr. McDermid: No, I am not. I am speaking about a colleague to my left.

Mr. Deans: I would certainly hope so. We are opposing it as it now stands because of the tremendous uncertainty in terms of what will happen within the next 10 months to a year and a half. In less than a year, or perhaps in less than six months, we will see a move on the part of the United States Congress which will detrimentally impact upon our lumber industry. We will see a move which detrimentally impacts upon our steel industry. We will see moves by the U.S. Congress which will

have a detrimental effect on our farming industry in a variety of ways. While this is happening, we are moving to make it easier for them to infiltrate our markets even further. If that is not naive, I ask the Hon. Member for Bow River what is naive? If that is not backward policy, what is? Perhaps someone in the House could explain to me why we ought to be taking these steps right now. I am not only referring to these steps, as they are only a drop in the bucket compared with what is about to be begun at the negotiating table by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), his Minister for International Trade (Mr. Kelleher) and the administration of the United States. A sell-out is taking place, and the Government, in an almost obscene way, seems to think that if we sell everything out somehow we will be better off. I fail to understand the rationale. I fail to understand what caused the Government to come to the decisions it has reached. I do not understand why we would be moving to reduce tariffs in advance of any discussions about fair trading arrangements. I do not understand why we would not have held off on making any further compromise efforts until we saw clearly from the United States what its over-all negotiating posture was to be.

As I have said, over the last weekend and going back over many years, as we sit down to discuss the impact of the actions they are about to undertake, we cannot help but draw the conclusion that a nation of this size, entering into a negotiating process of that type, must have available to it every method and means to protect itself in advance. We must have everything to use in the protection process to ensure that we are not steamrolled along the way as a result of its negotiating posture and overwhelming economic strength.

I am not making a definite statement about whether or not it might be possible to work something out in certain sectors. I frankly do not know the answer to that, and I am willing to admit it. I do not know if there is a way to work out some sectoral agreements, but I do not think we can go to the bargaining table with all the strength we need if, in advance of the process beginning, we have already moved to eliminate much of the somewhat small but nevertheless important tariff protection which currently exists. That is what the argument is in a nutshell. If we are to negotiate over the next two years, and if in the process of that negotiation we are to attempt to work out some agreements with the United States, there has to be some give and take. If we have already given everything before we sit down, then all that will be left will be the "take". From the meetings I have had over last weekend and stretching back as far as three years ago, I want to tell the House that the U.S. is bound and determined that whatever taking is to be done will be done by that country and not by us.

I say to my colleagues, those who care to listen, that we ought not to pass this piece of legislation at the moment. We need to have in our hands at least some means of putting before them possible retaliation—and I do not like that use of the word; it is not even the correct word—or some means of easing the pain, if in the event they do that which I understand they are about to do, that is, protect their own at the expense of ours. It is not being anti-American to suggest that what