

Softwood Lumber Products Export Charge Act

Mr. McDermid: Do you believe the Americans?

Mr. Langdon: —that the U.S. is absolutely concerned, committed and adamant about the fact that this money will not be used to assist the lumber industry in this country. It goes further than that and indicates that among the things we cannot do is award contracts for silviculture, road building or recreational and other foresting activities on a non-competitive basis. If we chose, for example, to give to a co-operative in New Brunswick, or a group of young people in British Columbia, or a group of native people in Alberta the chance to build recreational facilities on the basis of a non-competitive contract because we believe it is socially right, the U.S.—

Mr. McDermid: No, no, no. That is crazy.

Mr. Langdon: I can quote the details in the letter.

Mr. McDermid: That is nonsense.

Mr. Langdon: It is absolutely the case.

Mr. McDermid: It is nonsense.

Mr. Langdon: That will not be permitted. It is right here in black and white. Anyone who wants to see it can write our office and we will send it to them. As I say, it is not from the U.S. but from the Canadian Lumbermen's Association who have concluded that this is the intentions of the U.S. in this case.

I have to go on and indicate that as well as—

Mr. McDermid: Where does it say that?

Mr. Langdon: I seem to remember the Parliamentary Secretary saying he was going to be quiet.

Mr. McDermid: Fair ball; just tell me where it is in the letter.

Mr. Langdon: As usual, he is not sticking to his commitments.

● (1900)

I make the point very clearly again that this same set of detailed points made by the Canadian Lumbermen's Association indicates, first, that the agreement "demonstrates that the lack of input from the involved softwood lumber industry created unnecessary problems and backlash from January 1 to date". It indicates as well that there were very important producers within their association who "were left in limbo". It also indicates that exclusions for the Maritimes must be included on the agenda of the first modifications meeting in 1987.

Worst of all, Madam Speaker, the letter indicates that the Canadian lumbermen learned last week that:

—our European softwood lumber customers are worried they will be flooded—

Accordingly, we understand, on very sound authority, a number of European importers are trying to have their governments initiate action to impose a 15 per cent tax on our softwood lumber imports.

In addition to the industries opposition, I want to quote the detailed reactions of the Canadian Paperworkers Union which represents 65,000 men and women across Canada. This union indicates that it studied the agreement very carefully. It strongly believes:

that such an agreement threatens the livelihood of our membership in the lumber sector— The agreement not only endangers jobs in the sector but also dramatically illustrates the untenable position of the Mulroney Government in its talks with the United States on the issue of free trade.

Let us be very clear that it is not only industry but a major part of the trade union movement in the country which stands with us and many newspapers across the country which have opposed this agreement. There is a widely and deeply felt opposition to what is seen as a massive sellout of the hopes of the country and our economic independence. The Conservative Government is trying, not only to force this legislation through, but to force it through by cutting off debate. I say shame and I am sure the country says shame as well.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me the honour of speaking in this debate. This is my second opportunity to do so this week. As the saying goes, the speech gets better the second time around. I was hoping that we would have an opportunity to hear clarification of this abominable piece of legislation from government Members. Unfortunately, they have been plagued for the past while with severe and traumatic psychological depressions and, therefore, have not been able to rouse themselves to the full fervor of an explanation, which I know they would otherwise like to provide.

Earlier today my colleague from York South—Weston talked about Shakespeare and quoted Hamlet most eloquently. That brought to mind how much we in Canada need Shakespeare to describe the present Government. When the free trade initiative was first launched Government members were full of hosannas. They paraded out on the streets that this was going to be the salvation of Canada. Shakespeare spoke of the seven stages of man. With regard to the first stage he said:

—the lover, sighing like a furnace with a woeful ballad made to his mistress' eyebrow.

That was certainly the position of our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). He was singing a ballad to his mistress' eyebrow, telling us all what a furnace of affection he would have for the Americans as he brought about free trade.

Watching the face of the Prime Minister yesterday brought to mind the second stage of man as Shakespeare expressed it. He said:

—the whining schoolboy with his satchel and shining morning face creeping like snail unwillingly to school.

Only Shakespeare could describe our Prime Minister in such eloquent terms, going from the woleful lover to the schoolboy sneaking like a snail as he went, cap-in-hand, to the American vice-president supplicating to save his political skin.