

If Hon. Members would leave this matter for a few days, I would invite them to discuss it, and if after that the Hon. Member for Winnipeg North Centre still feels that his complaint is there I shall hear the Hon. Member.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

SOFTWOOD LUMBER PRODUCTS EXPORT CHARGE ACT

MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Miss Carney that Bill C-37, an Act respecting the imposition of a charge on the export of certain softwood lumber products, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee, and the amendment of Mr. McDermid (p. 2601).

Mr. Jacques Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): Mr. Speaker, I had the floor when the House adjourned for lunch, and as you will recall, I was describing the seven capital sins mentioned in the December 30 letter sent to the Coalition for Fair Lumber Imports by the American Trade Representative, Clayton Yeutter, and the American Secretary for Trade, Malcolm Baldrige. The letter identified seven types of measures which the Americans would not accept that Canada, that is either the federal Government or the provinces, take to help the lumber industry.

I had just pointed out that the granting of subsidies or low cost loans to a lumber company would be viewed by the American Government as a violation of the odious agreement between the two countries.

To continue, the letter also mentions forest management as a forbidden area of intervention. This means that provincial Governments would not be able to develop reforestation programs.

Yet, as we know, in many Canadian provinces, especially my own Province of Quebec, there is an acute need for reforestation. Forest management and stock renewal have long been neglected in Quebec. In many parts of my province, log cutters have to go further and further to find trees to harvest, which increases their operational costs.

In addition, the Quebec Government has just announced measures to promote reforestation in the province and members of the industry will be asked to contribute. The representatives of the forest industry whom I had an opportunity to meet recently told me that it is financially impossible for them to contribute to the reforestation program of the Quebec Government while paying a 15 per cent tax on the wood they export to the United States.

This means that this odious agreement between the Canadian Government and the Government of the United States on the lumber issue threatens the reforestation programs of the various Canadian provinces. This is one more thing which leads me to say that this agreement between our two countries came about because the Canadian Government decided to

Softwood Lumber Products Export Charge Act
capitulate and go down on its knees before the American Government.

Mr. Speaker, this is one of the reasons why Members on this side of the House are strongly opposed to giving second and even third reading to Bill C-37. We would prefer the Bill to be shelved. The only way to get out of this mess would be for the Canadian Government to get back to the table with the Americans to negotiate a more reasonable agreement which would benefit, not harm or diminish, the Canadian forest industry.

That is what we want, Mr. Speaker. Since my allotted time has expired, I shall now resume my seat.

• (1530)

Mr. André Harvey (Chicoutimi): Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to comment on a Bill that is extremely important for the entire country. We must not forget that the forestry industry involves one million Canadian workers, with over 200,000 in Quebec.

The previous speaker pointed out that our Canadian forests had been neglected, especially the forests in Quebec. I think that is an indication of the previous Liberal administration's failure to act, Mr. Speaker.

Agreed, we have not been sufficiently concerned about reforestation in Canada, and that is why this Government has signed a number of very important agreements with the provinces, including Quebec. It signed an agreement involving \$300 million a few months ago, to help make up for the lack of reforestation in recent years.

Mr. Speaker, Members from ridings where the forestry industry is very important have a hard time keeping a straight face when Liberal Members make comments that are sometimes entirely incorrect. I remember the Hon. Member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier) who said that all the provinces were against this agreement. I think it is absurd to say that, when we all know that nine provinces out of ten spoke out in favour of the agreement and that the province that was opposed has about 4.5 per cent of total production in the industry.

Mr. Speaker, I think people should know that this Government is fully aware of the importance of the forestry sector. How could anyone be against an agreement introduced here in the House that will enable us to inject another \$600 million into rescuing our Canadian forests? Instead of letting the Americans skim off \$1.4 billion, we will be able to reinvest that money here in our own forests.

I think this amply demonstrates that Members who do not represent ridings with forest areas are not well-informed on the subject. How could anyone say that the provinces are opposed when the Quebec Minister of Trade has said that this is a very important agreement, because of what it contains and also in terms of Quebec's sovereignty? I would like to quote what was said by Mr. MacDonald of the Quebec Government, which is certainly not against the agreement, Mr. Speaker. He said,