

Supply

the Leader of the NDP (Mr. Broadbent) to present their positions on behalf of their Parties. I can only regret that the Leader of the Government was not in the House to present the Government's position. Obviously he was not meeting with his constituents in Sept-Îles; that is quite clear from his answers in Question Period.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member has been here long enough to know that he should not reflect upon the presence or absence of any Member in the House.

Mr. Caccia: Oh, come on.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): That is fine. I do not intend to argue with any of his colleagues either. I just want to bring that to his attention.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, I assume that you will not deduct the intervention from the time allotted for my speech.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): You are stooping awfully low now, Lloyd.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, Canadians will be looking to the political Parties to put forward their case, even though it is very clear, and has been right from the day this announcement was made over two years ago, that the Government does not want to put its case in front of the Canadian people. It may want to put propaganda in front of them but it is not prepared to put forward its argument justifying such a major uprooting of the entire Canadian system at this time.

The point of this debate should be to get down to the essentials. Let us ask why the Government undertook this incredibly momentous decision to fundamentally alter the entire fabric of Canada from an east-west relationship to a north-south relationship. I want to quote the advocates of the free trade proposal. These are not the people who oppose it, they are those who have been in favour. The Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) loves to point to the Economic Council of Canada. They said that any agreement should clearly define those subsidies which can be attacked with countervailing actions because they do not fit current definitions.

Tom D'Aquino, President of the Business Council on National Issues, the corporate spokesman for Canada, said that remedies must be based on a commonly established set of principles and mutually acceptable definitions of behaviour, a remedy process where both Americans and Canadians have equal access, and a dispute mechanism with teeth.

The Macdonald Royal Commission said there must be new rules applied to countervailing duties and subsidies.

The Minister for International Trade (Miss Carney) said we must sign a deal that ensures there will no longer be countervailing duty powers. The result would be the elimination of countervailing duties by both countries, she said.

• (1530)

I could go on. The fact is that the bottom line, the unquestionable goal, the unalterable objective of the Government was to secure an exemption from U.S. trade law, to eliminate the use of countervail and anti-dumping, to find ways to move Canadians away from the harassment based upon those trade remedies. Has that been achieved through this agreement? Would anyone even try to suggest that U.S. trade law no longer applies, that there will not be countervail powers attached, that we have somehow been exempted from those trade laws?

We got a meaningless, Mickey Mouse mechanism which simply provides a review procedure to determine whether U.S. law has been applied. We already had that. We could already go to the International Court of Trade. We could already go to the GATT for such definitions.

I suggest further, Mr. Speaker, that not only did the Government not achieve anything of significance, it has taken a major step backward. The small print of the agreement says that if this country chooses to use the binational mechanism we forfeit our right to go to GATT. At least we could challenge the law under GATT. At least we can say that the definition of "subsidy" used in U.S. trade law is unfair. We could say, as we have in many previous cases, that the American attempts to dictate to this and other countries what their domestic programs should be is completely beyond the definition of what is fair or unfair in trade. Under this agreement the Government has abdicated our right to use GATT in order to challenge that law.

We saw the signs in the softwood lumber case. The Government refused to challenge that case under GATT and, therefore, set in train the precedent which we now see entrenched in the principles of the agreement.

I assert that not only did the Government not achieve that which it said it was going to achieve, but it has in fact retreated substantially from the defences that Canadian industry had against unfair trading practices applied by the Americans. Not only is it not an achievement, it is an absolute deficit. It is a withdrawal, a backward step. As soon as Canadians find out that the Government has achieved surrender, not victory, they will turn rapidly on this document.

By the very standards set by the Government itself and its allies the prime purpose was to get secure, guaranteed access. The Government has failed totally. It has achieved nothing close to that objective. In fact, the Government is an accomplice in further reducing the right of Canadians to try to achieve proper protection against unfair trade actions by the United States. That is very clear in this agreement.

The other side of the equation is also important, that being what we give up. I was in the riding of the Deputy Prime Minister (Mr. Mazankowski), Vegreville, Alberta, and after looking at the agreement someone commented that this deal was similar to the Edmonton Oilers trading Wayne Gretzky