

Oral Questions

that are now in effect in Canada. That is quite clear when one reads the terms of the agreement.

As to any suggestion that those outside of government can influence government spending, I can only tell the Hon. Member that we in this Government decide upon government policy, and not anyone from the outside.

The fact that many members of the labour movement in Canada are asking that the Leader of the New Democratic Party be removed from office is not to say that their advice should be heeded. The fact that the same individuals who came out against free trade are now coming out against the Leader of the New Democratic Party is not to say that their advice should be listened to.

CHAMBER'S REQUEST THAT ROYAL COMMISSION BE
APPOINTED

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton—Melville): The "Bay Street" buddies of the Minister, mainly in the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, have called upon the Government to establish a royal commission on social programs in this country.

I would ask the Prime Minister to confirm today that he will say "no" to his Bay Street buddies, that he will say "no" to the multinationals in this country, and that there will be no royal commission looking to cutback the social programs in place in Canada today.

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister and the majority on this side of the House were elected by the voters of Main Street Canada, and those are the people we intend to listen to for the next four years.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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TRADE

SOFTWOOD LUMBER TAX—LAY-OFFS ANNOUNCED BY
GREAT WEST FOREST PRODUCTS

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade.

Great West Forest Products of Thunder Bay today announced the lay-off of 180 employees.

Some Hon. Members: Shame, shame!

Mr. Comuzzi: That lay-off will be followed by a lay-off of a further 180 people who work in the bush. In addition, 60 independent contractors will lose their jobs.

This lay-off, in total, will affect 420 workers.

In its press release the company states that the closure is a direct result of the 15 per cent export tax imposed by this Government.

Why has the Government not taken action to get rid of that export tax, a tax that is costing hundreds of jobs in northern Ontario?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): The export tax was a tax—

An Hon. Member: That is a tax on Main Street Canada, John.

Mr. Crosbie: The export tax was a tax imposed after a great deal of consultation between the Government of Canada and the Governments of the provinces most affected by the threatened American actions in connection with softwood lumber. Rather than having increased tariffs attached to Canadian softwood lumber products going into the U.S., it was felt that the money should be kept in Canada, and it is for that reason that the export tax was imposed.

Through the increase in stumpage fees and, in certain provinces, the imposition of the 15 per cent export tax, the additional moneys are retained in Canada, principally in British Columbia, as opposed to going into the coffers of the U.S.

Mr. Speaker, this is not something that was voluntary on our part. It was, rather, to salvage a situation that was not of our making.

Ms. Copps: That was Pat Carney's "final offer".

Mr. Crosbie: When and if it becomes possible to alter that arrangement, and the provinces and the other parties concerned wish to have it changed, we would be more than willing to sit down and discuss it with them.

Ms. Copps: Are you going to amend the Free Trade Agreement?

REQUEST FOR ELIMINATION OF PROVISION IN FREE
TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. Joe Comuzzi (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): My information is that this is just the tip of the iceberg in so far as the loss of jobs in Thunder Bay is concerned.