

but one official said that the loss would run into the tens of millions of dollars annually (*The Citizen*, January 25).

Just before the bill was made law, Canada had sent a diplomatic note to the US State Department protesting the "Buy American" provisions as a violation of US obligations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Also protesting the law was Pauline Jewett (NDP, New Westminster-Coquitlam), who told the House of Commons January 26, "Perhaps our government should remind the President that his country's trade practices are not so free as he would have Americans and Canadians believe." Mr. Reagan had a day earlier given his State of the Union Address, in which he had reaffirmed his commitment to free trade. As well as the "Buy American" measures, Miss Jewett claimed that recent grain credit measures and US efforts to impose duty on Canadian lumber exports into that country also showed that the US was not committed to free trade.

### **Oil Rig Workers Compensation Abolished**

A bill passed by the US Congress December 10 prevents Canadians from filing compensation claims in the US for injury or death on US-owned offshore oil rigs operating in Canadian waters, if compensation in Canada is available. The law applies to other countries as well. The bill had been opposed by the Canadian and Newfoundland governments, and some US politicians.

The circumstances under which the bill was passed annoyed both Canadian and US politicians. "It was really sleazy," said Brian O'Malley, an aide to Michigan Democratic Representative Dennis Hertel, who had opposed the bill. The legislation reportedly slid through both the Senate and the House of Representatives late on December 10 as a "miscellaneous provision" to a commercial fisheries bill enforcing a Pacific fisheries agreement with Japan. "We were victims of an incredible sucker punch and an abuse of procedure," Mr. O'Malley said. US opponents had believed that they had fought the bill to a standstill, and Representative Hertel had recently written to Newfoundland Liberal Leader Stephen Neary saying the bill had been shelved. The measures had been lobbied for by US oil rig owners and insurance companies, and the enactment was "orchestrated quietly" by Louisiana Democrats Russell Long in the Senate and John Breaux in the House of Representatives. Major oil rig companies are based in Louisiana, including the Ocean Drilling and Exploration Co. Ltd. (ODECO), which had leased the oil rig *Ocean Ranger*, whose sinking off the coast of Newfoundland had claimed sixty-seven Canadian lives. Thirty-one lawsuits totalling \$226 million had been filed in US federal courts seeking damages from the *Ocean Ranger's* operators. The new law does not affect these claims (*Globe and Mail*, December 14).

John Crosbie (PC, St. John's West) described the US "abuse of procedure" to the House of Commons December 16. He wanted unanimous consent to a motion:

That the Government of Canada protest in most vigorous terms to the President of the US and to the US Congress with respect to the enactment of the said legislation and that the Government request President Reagan to veto the legislation, and that if such a Canadian protest is ineffective and the legislation becomes law, that Canada take

the necessary steps to refuse permission for US-owned drilling rigs to operate within Canadian territorial waters and the Canadian 200-mile economic zone until such time as the legislation is revoked.

On December 14, Rod Murphy (NDP, Churchill) had issued a press release which said that Canada should require owners of US oil rigs operating in Canadian waters to post bonds to protect the interests of their Canadian workers. "We were led to believe this bill would never make it through Congress. Now that it has, we must take steps to insure that Canadians working on these rigs will have the protection of compensation if and when there are accidents."

In Newfoundland, Energy Minister William Marshall said that in approving the legislation, the US politicians "might be cutting off their nose to spite their face," because Newfoundland would now reconsider the need for US-owned ships and drilling rigs to work in its offshore areas (*Globe and Mail*, December 16).

### **IJC Appointment**

Prime Minister Trudeau announced December 3 the appointment of J. Blair Seaborn as Canadian Chairman of the International Joint Commission (IJC), effective December 20. Mr. Seaborn had been Deputy Minister of Environment since 1974. There had been a Canadian vacancy on the Canada-US commission, which investigates and helps settle boundary, lake and river disputes between the two countries, since January 1981. This had caused concern that Canadian interests were not being fully represented.

### **Great Lakes Area Chemical Pollution**

Concern over the flow of chemical contaminants into the Niagara River-Lake Ontario basin from chemical dumps near Niagara Falls, New York increased during this two month period, as new studies revealed the extent of the problem. In the US, governments and companies are fighting over who should have to clean up the toxic dumps, which have been leaking toxic waste through rock into waterways with the potential of contaminating water supplies for millions of people on both sides of the border. The New York State Department of Health issued a report in December which said that the contamination of the Lake Ontario-Niagara River basin was increasing rather than decreasing. In the House of Commons December 7, Joe Reid (PC, St. Catharines) wanted to know what Environment Minister John Roberts was doing about it. The Minister responded that his department had helped by providing assistance to Canadians who wished to present their concerns in US court cases, had undertaken studies to monitor and assess the situation, and had made vigorous representations to the United States. He also said that the information he had received from his officials was there was no pollution danger to water supply.

The next month, Mr. Roberts stated that toxic chemicals leaking from one waste dump near Niagara Falls, NY, was threatening the drinking-water of four million Canadian and one million US residents. The "S-Area" dump contains 57,000 tonnes of chemical waste which is leaking toward Canada through cracks in the rock into the Niagara River and thus into Lake Ontario. Mr. Roberts called this "a

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