

*Supply*

The Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark), the former Prime Minister of Canada, did not seek such an assurance many months ago. It was a crisis situation in British Columbia. He went on bended knee to the Secretary of State of the United States, Mr. Shultz, and asked him then, after the fact. That is incompetence. That is clear and unequivocal incompetence by our national Government which is dealing with perhaps the most important subject matter that has come down the pike in a long time.

For one moment let us consider what happened in British Columbia. As if the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) was taking part in a Shakespearian play, he displayed that he was absolutely devastated and upset that the United States would place a 35 per cent import duty on shakes and shingles from British Columbia. The fact of the matter is that the Premier of British Columbia informed the Prime Minister on May 7, 1986 that the matter was in the hands of the President of the United States. What did the Prime Minister do? Was he in Florida at that time? Was he basking in the sun somewhere? What was he doing on behalf of Canadians? What was the Secretary of State for External Affairs doing at the time? What was the Minister for International Trade (Mr. Kelleher) doing? What was the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) doing? What were those Members in Cabinet from British Columbia doing? Were they all asleep? Obviously, the answer is yes. That is incompetence. One does not proceed with negotiations and allow something to take place which is detrimental to Canada, not just to British Columbia but to all of Canada. We look sloppy. We are acting sloppy. We do not have our act together. It is the national Government, not the provincial Governments, not the press gallery and not members of the Opposition, which is incompetent and at fault in this process.

I would like to read to Hon. Members what the Premier wrote to the Prime Minister on May 7. He said:

As you know an investigation has been conducted under Section 201 of the U.S. Trade Laws regarding imports of wood shingles and shakes from Canada. The International Trade Commission has determined injury to U.S. industry and has forwarded recommendations to President Reagan.

The letter goes on:

The matter now rests with the President who has full discretion in deciding what action, if any, is to be followed. He is required to announce his decision on or before May 24, 1986.

I can table this document if that is the wish of Hon. Members. It is here in black and white. It shows that the Government of Canada knew about this situation. What did it do? It waited until the announcement was made and then it took some retaliatory actions in regard to some matters which will affect the consumers of the country.

The Minister of Finance has said that the issue is behind us. What about the workers? What about the human side of these free trade talks? What about the unemployed? What about those individuals who want to provide for their families and who do not want to be on welfare? They want to provide an education for their children and an opportunity to make an

honest and decent living in this great country of ours. I tell Hon. Members that these serious flaws by the national Government are, in my view, akin to total incompetence.

The Prime Minister made a great announcement that he has an agreement with the provincial Premiers. The only obligation he has from the Premiers is the obligation to say no at the end of the day. That is the only obligation he has. Thus he can go out and work night and day, or send his officials or the \$1,000-a-day Simon Reisman, and they can veto it. The national Government is really in control!

It seems to me that the Government's action on this most important initiative was predicated on the view that if one smiles at the President of the United States, and if he smiles back, and if one sings with him, then somehow economic matters and foreign policy of great substance and effect will somehow resolve themselves.

• (1530)

If this great and special relationship with the President of the United States has done anything for Canada, it has hurt Canada. It would seem that there was an onus or an obligation on the part of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), representing all Canadians, to have telephoned the President of the United States upon receipt of the letter from the Premier of British Columbia and to have objected strongly to the measure. He should have said that it was not part of the Quebec summit. However, the Prime Minister did not do that. Again, where is the competence? Where is the thinking? Where is the logic? There is none.

We have a \$20 billion surplus with the United States. We cannot think for a moment that the United States will sit by, will smile, and will say "Thank you very much, Brian. It is nice to know you. Maybe we will see you in Los Angeles or Washington at some point in time. We will have a great time. Our wives will have coffee, go on a little shopping spree, and have a good time", and somehow these matters will be resolved. It is a childish view of international economic matters and foreign relations. Again I point out that that is the view of the Government. That is incompetence, absolute and total incompetence.

I could go on and on and on dealing with things the Government is not doing, but the most recent evidence of its incompetence was saying to the United States that it would become involved in a trade war. Yesterday the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) made a statement regarding retaliatory actions. Was that done to assist the workers in British Columbia? The answer is no, a clear and unequivocal no. Why was it done? It was done because they wanted to say to the United States that they were really serious. If that was so, they would have picked up the telephone some months ago and called the President. They would have said: "If we are to go on the route toward free trade, all unilateral actions are off while we are negotiating". That would have been the thing to do. However, good old smiley Brian smiled away, our Prime Minister, the great one,