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Minister slams U.S. over lumber

Southam Newspapers
 WASHINGTON — Trade Minister Pierre Pettigrew has accused the Bush administration of pandering to the U.S. lumber industry while ignoring American home buyers who could spur an economic recovery.

"This administration has systematically decided to listen narrowly to the producers, the protective producers' point of view," Pettigrew told reporters Monday after high level meetings in Washington. "They have done every little thing that the producers have been asking."

Pettigrew sounded alarmist and upped the decibel level in an attempt to focus Washington's attention on a dispute that threatens a \$10-billion annual export business.

"This year has been the worst year," an exasperated Pettigrew said. "On every little thing they have followed the script of the producers. They have not listened to the consumers."

Pettigrew lambasted the U.S. Commerce Department for slapping a punitive 19.3-per-cent duty on Canadian lumber imports.

"The situation is disappointing and frustrating because of the consistency in the incoherence of the Commerce Department's decisions over the



PETTIGREW

years," Pettigrew said of the long-running trade spat.

Commerce had behaved in a "crassly political" and "protectionist" fashion, Pettigrew said, paying no heed to the merits of the case.

"Commerce just finds what it wants to find probably to cater to the protectionist lobby of the producers," he said.

Logic would dictate that the pro-trade Republican administration would listen to the American consumer and the home builders' association, he argued.

"This administration is not listening to them," Pettigrew said. The Bush administration "is on the verge of imposing a tax on American home buyers which is higher than the tax rebate he has given the American tax payer."

The U.S. National Association of Home Builders claims home buyers will pay an extra \$1,000 for the price of a home because of the tax on Canadian timber. U.S. President George W. Bush handed American individual tax payers a \$300 tax rebate in the spring to jumpstart a flagging economy that teeters on the brink of recession.

"The economy is dangerously slowing down but there is one sector of the economy that is still showing some vitality," Pettigrew said. "Is this the time to impose such a drastic tax on the home builders?"

The Chretien government, and Liberal and Conservative governments before, have come under fire for negotiating a Bandaid solution to the trade dispute with the U.S.

Natives outraged as all-white jury chosen for trial of police officers

SASKATOON (CP) — An all-white jury was picked Monday to try two police officers accused of dumping an aboriginal man on the outskirts of the city in freezing winter weather.

"There's no aboriginal people there at all, not one," said Loretta Wilson, an aboriginal woman who was among the pool from which the jury was chosen. "This process, it wasn't fair, it wasn't fair at all."

Wilson would have liked to see six aboriginals on the 12-member panel. "I was willing to be fair if I had been picked, listened to the evidence and everything," she said.

But lawyers for the accused officers said the jury selection process was just.

"I think we picked a jury that will listen to the case and render a fair and just verdict," defence lawyer Bill Roe said.

"I have great faith in the jury system. I think that juries are fair and that they do the right

thing and I think this jury falls into that category. The age, race and background (of members) doesn't matter."

Dan Hachten and Ken Munson, both veteran Saskatoon city police officers, are charged with assault and unlawful confinement.

They were charged after Darrell Night alleged two officers apprehended him without cause then later forced him out of their cruiser near an outlying power station on Jan. 28, 2000, when temperatures dipped to -25 C.

Sitting within arm's reach of the accused, prospective jurors were asked five questions regarding what they had heard about the case and what influence race might have upon them.

"Would your ability to judge the evidence in this case without bias, prejudice or partiality be affected by the fact that the persons charged are white and the complainant is abo-

riginal?" Justice Eugene Scheibel of Court of Queen's Bench asked each prospective juror.

Scheibel also queried each person who came before him about whether they had formed any opinions about the accused because of news reports.

Seven men and five women were chosen from 29 people questioned. Two alternates were also picked for the trial which is to begin Tuesday.

The officers had asked the judge to move the trial from Saskatoon because of intense media scrutiny of the case, but the judge refused.

Morris Bodnar, Munson's lawyer, defended the selection of an all-white jury from the more than 100 people selected for the jury panel.

"We don't make the selection of the jury panel. The jury panel is selected by the sheriff's office," he said.

Johnson sweeps country awards

CALGARY (CP) — There was nothing complicated about Carolyn Dawn Johnson's dominance Monday night at the Canadian Country Music Awards.

The Alberta-born singer-songwriter took five awards, including single and SOCAN song of the year for Complicated, one of two No. 1 hits in Canada from her debut album, Room with a View.

"Wow," said the Nashville-based Johnson, who took an unprecedented 10 nominations into the ceremony, but had never before won an award for her own performing.

"I hope I keep making you proud," she told the audience, her voice quavering with emotion.

Prior to the awards, Johnson had fretted that with her family attending the ceremony, she'd hate to go home empty-handed.

She needn't have worried. As it was, she took an armful of trophies.

She was honoured as top female artist of the year and rising star. Room with a View, which has topped Canada's country charts and cracked Billboard's Top 10 country list, was named top album.

Fellow Albertan Terri Clark won the fans' choice award as top entertainer. Clark's video No Fear, a tribute to the Special Olympics, was named best video.

"This award really belongs to all the Special Olympics athletes all over Canada," said Clark, who co-wrote the song with Mary Chapin Carpenter.

Ontario's Jason McCoy was male artist of the year, while top group honours went to the Wilkinsons, the family trio from the Trenton, Ont., area, who were hosting the show.

Cape Breton fiddling sensation Natalie MacMaster, who was Grammy-nominated for best traditional folk album, was named the best roots artist — the first time Canadian country music has honoured the genre. Veteran Lisa Brokop took home two awards: best independent female artist and independent song of the year for Something Undeniable.

Duane Steele was named independent male artist, while the Poverty Plainsmen took home independent group.

Faith Hill's Breathe was named the top-selling album in Canada.



CP photo

Carolyn Dawn Johnson performs at the Canadian Country Music Awards in Calgary on Monday. Johnson had ten nominations and won five awards.

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Justice ministers demand registry for sex offenders

Southam Newspapers

LIVERPOOL, N.S. — Provincial and territorial justice ministers agreed Monday on resolutions that call on the federal government to stop stalling on establishing a national sex offender registry and to tighten loopholes in its DNA databank legislation.

The calls for swift action, spearheaded by Manitoba and Ontario, came after three hours of closed doors meetings Monday morning between the provincial ministers at their annual gathering at an exclusive lodge on the southwestern Nova Scotia coast. The resolutions will be presented to federal Justice Minister Anne McLellan when she arrives today for two days of discussions with her provincial counterparts.

"There was no fed bashing here," Ontario Attorney General David Young said in an interview. "It was simply an opportunity for the provinces to take stock of what is working within the justice system and what is not working within the justice system."

The ministers adopted a resolution by Manitoba Justice Minister Gord Mackintosh that calls on McLellan to take immediate action to establish a national registry for sex offenders, which would contain more detailed information on the movements of pedophiles than police currently have at their fingertips with the existing national law enforcement computer databases.

The federal government is lukewarm to the idea of such a registry. The justice ministers' resolution on Monday follows a commitment by their respective premiers at last month's first ministers' conference in British Columbia to push for a federal registry. Last week, Ontario Premier Mike Harris said he would be prepared to pay for a registry if the

federal government would not.

"It picks up exactly where the premiers left off," said Young.

The ministers also adopted an Ontario resolution that urges the federal government to tighten its current law governing its DNA databank for violent offenders. Under the current law, convicted murderers, among other violent offenders, must submit a DNA sample so that the government can establish a genetic fingerprinting database.

In an open letter to McLellan released this past weekend, Young urges the federal government to close loopholes in the law that do not extend to some violent offenders. These include criminals convicted of offences before the law went into force last year, and sex offences under antiquated charges, such as gross indecency, that are no longer contained in the updated Criminal Code.

The country's federal and provincial attorneys general and justice ministers face an ambitious agenda during the next two days of meetings.

Today, McLellan is to present the provinces with the results of nationwide consultations on proposed amendments to the Divorce Act.

New provisions under discussion include providing more resources, such as counselling, to couples going through separations and changing the wording of the law to give it a less adversarial tone. Other issues to be discussed include Internet luring of children, a law that would outlaw so-called digital voyeurism with state-of-the-art hidden cameras, the future of the preliminary hearing, aboriginal justice, home invasion, organized crime, and an update on the federal government's lawsuits against large tobacco companies.