

REP. LES AUCCOIN

CONGRESSIONAL HEARING

GRAND RONDE, OREGON

AUGUST 10, 1987

TESTIMONY OF PETER MURPHY

Mr. Chairman, my name is Peter Murphy. I am president and chief executive of the Murphy Lumber company, a 78-year-old Oregon Company founded by my grandfather in 1909, and currently employing 500 Oregonians in five mills, and other kinds of related activities.

I am here this evening speaking about--not on behalf of--my industry. I suppose you could say I am speaking on behalf of my family, whose roots go back 48 years, to this tiny community of Grand Ronde. I spent the first sixteen years of my life in this community--my parents lived and worked in Grand Ronde for 30 years--I and all of my seven brothers and sisters have lived in Grand Ronde at one time or another--my first four years of grammar school were spent on this very site--the next four were in the area's other grade school--St. Michael's.

Murphy Lumber Company in the 1930's was this area's largest employer. Eighty percent of our workforce were Indian, mostly Grand Ronde. The Grand Ronde's were here long before the Murphy's, needless to say, but both of our "tribes" have deep and rich feelings for this unique part of Oregon.

I have been in the forest products business for a long time, as have my associates at Willamina, Fort Hill and Taylor Lumber. We all have similar concerns--forest management, stumpage prices, timber supply, trade practices, export policies, and scores of others.

None of us is naive enough to think that there are easy solutions--and that everyone is going to come away from this with a full plate.

But just as it is with almost anything controversial--there must be some room for compromise. Nothing is all black or all white, and I urge my fellow wood products representatives to continue to meet with tribal officials, as they have been doing since 1983, to work out these agreements.

The process has worked reasonably well on all but a few issues, the principal one being that of log exports. The Grand Ronde's, realizing the sensitivity of this particular issue, have offered what I consider an extremely reasonable compromise--a ten-year moratorium on log exports. At today's export prices, this, in effect, leaves four-and-a-half million dollars on the table over the next ten years.

The major concern seems to be timber supply. Figures from the State Department of Forestry show that the Tillamook Burn harvest will be well under way in 10 years, and that there will be an ample--or even a surplus--supply of timber.

In the meantime, local millowners lose nothing. The Tribe has promised to sell its timber by open bid--on a scheduled basis --on the open market--with appraisals similar to BIM. In the unlikely event that

there are no bidders for a given sale, the Tribe reserves the right to sell that particular tract for export. To date, local industry has refused to discuss compromise of any kind, and the issue remains unresolved.

I don't consider log exports to be dirty words. Our company has been exporting logs--and lumber--for many years, and will undoubtedly do so for many years to come. Log exports help keep our workers employed--bring foreign capital into Oregon--keep our operations in the black and significantly contribute to our bottom line.

I call on the opponents of log exports, therefore, to re-examine their position and their refusal to compromise, and to realize that the moratorium being offered, while not a perfect solution, does represent a considerable sacrifice from the Indians' standpoint, and one that should be recognized and appreciated. To think otherwise, I submit, will jeopardize this carefully crafted agreement and perhaps result in no export moratorium at all. In this case, industry would be the losers, and I would not want to see that.

And finally, I would like to speak as an American and an Oregonian. Our government, in 1954, terminated the Grand Ronde reservation, and sold its remaining 540 acres. The per capita return to the 900 tribal members was the princely sum of \$35 each, certainly not a large amount, even by 1954 standards.

Now it's time to right that wrong, and to do so with confidence and trust. Working together, we can add to the vitality and economic viability of this community--working against each other will only result in disruption and despair.

This brass ring will come around only once. Let's grab it now.