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Lawrence L. Herman

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INTRODUCTION: THE SOFTWOOD LUMBER DISPUTE

Lawrence Herman

You may think that this is unusual to have a panel discussion Saturday night after dinner. I am told this is a typical event at Case Western Reserve Law School; and so those of you who are here tonight, this is just part of a very typical Saturday evening in Cleveland.

We are looking forward to the discussion tonight. There are a couple of things that I think I should remark on before I very briefly introduce are two qualified speakers. They are qualified, indeed. We are very pleased that each of them with us tonight.

First, we have three persons who are probably representative of the Canadian position of the softwood lumber dispute. We do not mean by the composition of the panel to suggest that we are taking a pro-Canadian position or pro-U.S. position in the discussion tonight. We are going to try to be neutral and balanced.

Second, we are going to try to address the issue in terms of the overall conference program, that is the interests in the federal states that are brought to the table when you get major disputes of this kind underway, and how this particular dispute has engaged a variety, a huge variety, of interests in both sides of the border, beyond federal government.

The other thing that I think is interesting is that the softwood lumber issue is a huge issue in Canada. It is on the front pages of the business press all the time; yet it is barely a ripple in the U.S.

Let me introduce your speakers.

Ms. Anderson is an extremely well known attorney from Washington, who has done trade work both within the U.S. Government and in private practice for many years. She represents the Canadian Government in softwood disputes, and we are pleased to have her here.

Mr. Mach is a senior official with the government of Alberta. He has been involved in trade matters; trade policy matters, for many, many years, and has been exposed to the major issues of the day.

*Cassels, Brock & Blackwell, Toronto, Ontario.
Both panelists will be relatively brief because the objective is to engage the audience and show how lively Saturday night in Cleveland really can be.