

governing health and environmental issues. All these conditions are as many factors which condition markets and check interventions. This is where a government can intervene. In some cases the public interest prevails as, for instance, when it comes to protecting the environment. But in other cases the government tries to sway the pendulum our way. Then it is up to the government to urge other countries to create a more equitable economic environment, and that is the role which best suits the government. This is why it was so intent on signing the Free Trade Agreement with the United States: the objective was to do away with tariff barriers, harmonize standards and regulations, and of course ease the flow of goods and people.

I spoke of government measures which affect industry as a whole but, Madam Speaker, there are others which relate exclusively to the mining industry, and that happens to be the issue this evening. Asbestos for example—I know the subject for I come from an asbestos town—is said to be hazardous. When it became obvious that some countries had asbestos regulations based on faulty perceptions of the extent of danger involved, what did the Government of Canada do? It has paid attention to the industry's requests for assistance, conveyed its view on many occasions to other countries and international organizations, and supported financially the creation of an asbestos institute. The government, therefore, actively supports the creation of an international task force on mineral products including nickel and copper, as it is already supporting the existing lead-zinc group.

As you can see, Madam Speaker, the government makes every effort to enhance metal exports. By doing so, it assumes its own responsibility. It does not act as a substitute for the industry itself. Not only does the government do a lot for the industry, but he does so together with the interested parties. Although the government is involved in a variety of programs from year to year in the area of promotion, marketing and marketing support, we must recognize that the world mineral market is cyclical. For the past two years, for instance, the world market for most minerals and metals has been quite promising. Fully aware of the problems which the industry, miners and mining towns were facing, the

government took action. From 1984 to 1986, the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources, in co-operation with the Canadian Mining Association, organized a series of regional lecture dealing with the need to face competition. In other words, Madam Speaker, I suggest the motion was moved in good faith. It is consistent with the vision of a political party such as the NDP, but I suggest also that it is ill-advised, in view of the framework of our economy, our political systems and our international trade markets.

[*English*]

Mr. Al Horning (Okanagan Centre): Madam Speaker, I very much appreciate the opportunity given to me today to respond to a motion brought forward by the member for Timmins—Chapleau in regard to a co-operative mineral marketing agency to promote Canadian refined minerals in the world market-place.

To reiterate the comments made by my colleagues, Canada is a world leader in the mineral industry. It is also the largest importer of minerals and metals, of which a significant portion is purchased as feedstock for Canadian refineries and then re-exported.

In view of the fact that Canada has a relatively small population and generates a limited market for its commodities, it is only natural that Canada should export a high proportion of its production of some minerals and metals. I should mention that the bulk of Canada's minerals and metals exports go to the United States and Japan. It should not be thought, however, that Canada exports the bulk of its minerals in the form of ores and concentrates because nickel ore, gold, silver, copper and zinc concentrates receive further processing in Canada.

Import tariffs have been structured to establish and protect—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I apologize but I must interrupt the hon. member.

[*Translation*]

The hour provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96(1), this item is dropped from the Order Paper.