

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

(Mr. Mulroney) when he was against trade, are suddenly standing up in the House and defending a deal on which they never talked to the voters of Canada and for which they did not get elected themselves.

Clause 3(b) states:

(b) facilitate conditions of fair competition within the free-trade area established by the Agreement;

What is fair competition? This is absolutely central to the whole issue. What is fair and what is unfair, and to what extent will Canada be exempt? We know that Canada will not be exempt from unfair trade practice complaints in the United States. What is fair in terms of our social programs? Constantly we have been told that social programs were not on the bargaining table, and yet there is a section in the deal that states that subsidies are one thing that will be negotiated in the next five to seven years. We could then find out, far too late, that our social programs have been negotiated away because they are going to be treated as unfair subsidies.

This clause talks about "fair competition". What about our programs to promote regional development and create jobs in any particular region? We talk about facilitating conditions of fair competition, but we do not have definitions as to what is fair competition. It is not clear whether or not regional programs will be included. That has been left for negotiations later.

The Government is selling out the country, and some of the worst aspects of the deal are the unknown aspects. It is being left up to a process in which we have very little chance to be successful, and leaving it up to a process where two countries will be negotiating, one ten times the size of the other. At a later stage it would be very hard to pull out of it if there is going to be retaliation after we get well into this deal.

● (1950)

We have these crucial decisions left until later. There is talk about fair competition, Mr. Speaker. But there is no definition as to what constitutes fair competition. The question as to what competition will be fair is begged entirely in this deal. What is fair when you have a system with large multinational corporations in the United States that are well established, for whom it would be a very simple matter to extend their production to fill the entire Canadian market? They already have established brand names and dealerships. It will be very easy for them to add a night shift on Tuesday night through which they could fill the entire Canadian market. Our Conservative colleagues say, "Canadians can do the same thing. Canadian corporations will have fair competition and can enter the United States". But you have a company that is very much smaller that does not have a well known international brand name, that does not have a system of dealerships, that would require enormous capital to begin to advertise and do the kind of research and development necessary to hit that new market. This is totally naive.

Mr. McDermid: What a wimpish attitude. You are knocking Canadian entrepreneurs.

Ms. McDonald: This is a Government that does not look at how these decisions are made. Canadian entrepreneurship is not being knocked here. What is being knocked is a deal that is a sell-out. If the Hon. Member were a real believer in the trade deal, why didn't he say so in the last election? Why wasn't he honest about all the aspects of this deal? Why didn't he admit to Canadians that water was in the deal?

Mr. McDermid: It is not in the deal, that is why.

Ms. McDonald: What about our cultural independence? We all know that water is in the deal by virtue of being a good under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. The Government itself is beginning to admit that it has deceived Canadians by raising this totally false statement that it is only bottled water that is in the deal and not our fresh water. We are committed in this deal to share our most precious natural resource, water.

Mr. McDermid: That is not true. Tell the truth.

Ms. McDonald: It is indeed true.

Mrs. Sparrow: It is not true.

Ms. McDonald: It is very clear in the agreement that water is a good under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, and all goods are included in the requirement to export.

Mr. McDermid: Totally wrong.

Ms. McDonald: This is a totally new kind of agreement. Nothing in the world gives away that much in any kind of arrangement which is sold as being a trading arrangement.

Mr. McDermid: Your credibility is falling.

Ms. McDonald: This is not a trading arrangement but a sell-out of our most precious natural resources, including water and our non-renewable resources of oil and gas. This is a shameful sell out of Canadian sovereignty and Canadian natural resources by a Government and a Party that is looking at the cheapest of short-term advantages, advantages from corporations that are making money off the top but are not interested in the long-term development of the country and not interested in long-term job creation or stewardship of the environment or in keeping any of these resources for ongoing use for other people.

In clause 3(d), we read:

establish effective procedures for the joint administration of the Agreement and the resolution of disputes

What a laugh those effective procedures are! There will be a dispute settlement mechanism. Ultimately a dispute will go to a commission which is made up of the United States and Canada trade ministers. They will work on the basis of consensus. What kind of consensus will it be when there are