

Supply

brought in since I have been here has been opposed by our friends on the other side who have now become the apostles of deficit control. Is that not interesting?

Tax restructuring has made our Canadian manufacturers more competitive, difficult though it was to go through. I notice my hon. friends scoff. I notice they opposed the restructuring but they have absolutely no idea what they would put in its place.

New trade agreements have provided market access for our exports. Twenty-five per cent of the jobs in this country are dependent upon exports, and one needs somewhere to export to. Our friends across the way would get rid of our various trade agreements. I do not know where they propose to trade without them.

There are privatization and reduction in the size of government. Each of these measures has been opposed by the other side, yet those are the things that have taken 60,000 to 70,000 people off the payroll of the Canadian taxpayers.

There are industrial adjustment programs. Obviously structural changes in the economy impact directly on people. That is why the government has brought in the labour force development strategy the elements of which, once again, were opposed by the other side. It has taken a passive approach to handing out money to people and turned it into an active approach in terms of unemployment insurance. It not only provided interim support for people but provided opportunities for them to train themselves so they will be prepared to take advantage of the opportunities that exist as we head into the 21st century.

These programs have been targeted at improving productivity. I just quoted a figure a moment ago on how Canadian productivity has gone up. Improving productivity, quite simply, means enhancing our competitiveness and enabling us to take advantage of those opportunities.

The strategy is clearly working when we look at the growth in jobs. There are 118,000 more people employed in Canada today when compared with a year ago. Clearly it is working. One of the manifestations is when we look at the growth in trade surpluses. Clearly I am sure that if

my hon. friends opposite reflect soberly they will realize that actually these initiatives have done a great deal.

I know my time is limited, but I would like to focus on the trade area, some of the initiatives that the government has taken, the impact of those initiatives, and where we are going from here.

Trade agreements provide opportunities. Results come when firms, businesses and workers take advantage of those opportunities. If we are going to take a look at the free trade agreement and assess its results, and if we are going to look at the potential that NAFTA offers us, we have to look at them for what they are and not for what they are not. We cannot throw up a bunch of smoke-screens and simply go out and try to terrorize or scare Canadians.

I remember in 1988 when the Liberals and the NDP went around and told everybody they were going to lose medicare; they were going to lose this and they were going to lose that. Well, guess what? Four and a half years later what do we have to show for the free trade agreement? Our exports have gone up dramatically in Canada. We still have medicare and we still have our social programs.

The free trade agreement should not be confused with the recession in terms of its impact on the economy. The recession has devastated our economy in many respects. Let us face it, but let us try not to play the game, as I heard from some speakers earlier in this debate, by saying: "Ah well, every job that has been lost has nothing to do with the recession, it has everything to do with the free trade agreement".

• (1525)

I quoted a number of eminent authorities earlier today in responding to one of my hon. friends, but just for their benefit since I see a number of Liberal members in the House let me quote from one of the most reputable Liberal sources in the country, *The Toronto Star*. What did *The Toronto Star* have to say about the free trade agreement? Let me quote from *The Toronto Star* of February 7, 1993: "Far from creating the recession the FTA has softened its effect. The recession has been global and coincided with the fundamental restructuring of the world's economy. Critics too often attribute the effects of both the recession and restructuring to the