

In this final version, "Baucus-Danforth" only spells out a process with powers for information gathering on subsidies and the possible use of this information in the context of existing U.S. trade law. These powers are similar to those that the Canadian government has under existing laws, such as Section 48 of the Special Import Measures Act and Sub-section 59(2) of the Customs Tariff Act and other Canadian trade laws.

In light of the foregoing, the government concluded that no amendment to Bill C-130 was needed.

Opposition Amendments

Most of the amendments proposed by opposition members on the Committee fall into three categories. The first category consists of amendments that conflict with the Free Trade Agreement. As I said on July 11, Bill C-130, because it implements an international agreement, is not legislation where Parliament can pick and choose among the pieces. The agreement as a whole must be approved or rejected. To amend the legislation so that it conflicts with the agreement would amount to "tearing up the deal". Therefore, the government does not support these amendments.

The second category consists of amendments that purport to exempt from the legislation and the FTA matters such as social programs, environmental protection and native issues.

Such amendments arise from a mis-reading of the Free Trade Agreement. Canada remains, after as before the FTA, free to decide on such matters as social programs and native issues. The Free Trade Agreement is about commercial relations, not these matters. Moreover, the environmental protections built into the GATT have been incorporated in the FTA as well.

I must say Mr. Chairman that there are also a number of entirely frivolous amendments. I am disappointed that some members have obviously chosen not to take a responsible approach to the amendment to this historic bill.

Mr. Chairman, that is all that I would like to say in my opening remarks regarding amendments. The Committee will now review each clause and should be prepared to adopt amendments which ensure that the legislation accurately implements the Free Trade Agreement.

Before concluding, I am pleased to report that the U.S. implementing legislation was tabled in Congress while this Committee is carrying on its work of considering the Canadian implementing legislation.