

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

International Trade in November. Mr. Lougheed said that it became clear to him in the latter part of 1984 that Canada's future competitiveness, its future as a productive country, was dependent upon entering into broadened trade, first with the United States and later with the Pacific Rim.

In his view there were three options: The *status quo*, a sectoral agreement, and a comprehensive agreement. Perhaps all Members of the House would agree that the *status quo* is not the answer. What about the sectoral solution? Sectoral trade would not have been acceptable to the other party, and there are many problems with a sectoral agreement which did much for us in the remaining 20 per cent of our trade that is not now duty-free.

Mr. Lougheed came to the conclusion that a comprehensive agreement under Article 24 of the GATT was the correct way to proceed. No agreement is perfect. However, he said that he felt good about this agreement.

I wish to associate myself with the view of this distinguished Canadian and advocate to all Members of the House, particularly members of the Opposition, that they reconsider their position and embrace this, not as a panacea but as an opportunity for our country to grow and prosper.

**Mr. John Nunziata (York South—Weston):** Madam Speaker, in exactly 59 minutes, second reading debate in the Canadian House of Commons will end because of the Government's decision to invoke closure on what is without question the most important debate in the history of our country. There are 59 minutes left at second reading stage to determine whether or not this particular piece of legislation affecting the very heart of our country should or should not be endorsed in principle.

Bill C-130 is 123 pages of legislation amending 27 different Acts of this Parliament. The Government has the audacity simply to dedicate five days of debate to this important piece of legislation.

It is no coincidence that second reading debate is ending today, on July 5, 1988, in less than an hour. It is a belated birthday gift to the United States of America.

The Minister responsible for this particular agreement made an astonishing admission last week. He said: "I did not read the agreement". He is the key Minister responsible for the free trade agreement, which we like to refer to as the Mulroney-Reagan agreement. He has admitted that he has not even read the agreement. What utter contempt for his portfolio. What utter contempt for this Parliament. What utter and absolute contempt for the people of Canada. How can Canadians have trust in the Minister and the Government? How can they trust that the Government knows what it is doing when the Minister admits he has not read the agreement?

What Canadian would have a lawyer go to court for him or her without the lawyer knowing the facts of the case or reading the law involved? What sane Canadian would go to a doctor

who is intent on simply cutting the person open without knowing what organ to operate on?

The Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) says: "I once sold vacuum cleaners but I have never vacuumed a house. I once sold encyclopaedias but I never read the encyclopaedias". If given the opportunity, Canadians will say to the Minister responsible for this terrible agreement: "Go back to selling vacuum cleaners. Go back to selling encyclopaedias. You have no business affecting in such a negative and irresponsible fashion the future of our country".

Is it too much to ask the Minister to read 123 pages of legislation? All too often the Minister has trivialized the issue in the House. He has been seeking laughter and making humour. This is a serious matter that affects the sovereignty of our country. It affects the future of our country, and the only thing the Minister can do is make jokes. He is the clown of the House of Commons. The Minister admitted last week that he was winging it. He did not know what he was talking about. The people of Canada do not want a wing-nut Minister. They want a Minister who acts responsibly and who knows what he is doing.

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The Minister has hightailed it out of the House of Commons because he cannot stand the truth. The Government has decided to invoke closure on this measure. As a Member of Parliament I am given but 10 minutes to express my point of view on this most important piece of legislation affecting my constituents in the riding of York South—Weston and affecting all Canadians from coast to coast.

Why is the Government limiting debate? Why is the Government rushing into this so-called free trade agreement? Because the United States, Ronald Reagan, and the White House have given our Prime Minister his marching orders. They have given the Minister for International Trade his marching orders. They have been told to get that free trade agreement through and to give them a birthday present. It is a day late, but they are still giving the United States a birthday present.

Is it too much to ask for this Government to go to the people of Canada? Members of the Government said during the last election campaign, during the long hot summer of 1984: "We will consult. We will keep Canadians informed. We will consult with people from coast to coast on any national issue of importance". What happened to that promise? It is but another broken promise.

If members of the Conservative Government were true to their word, they would be consulting with Canadians now. They would be giving Canadians an opportunity to review this agreement. While the Minister may not be interested in reading this agreement, other Members of Parliament and other Canadians are very interested in it. Why is he so afraid to read the agreement? Why is he so much of a coward as to allow Canadians the opportunity to enter into a meaningful