

**Ms. Dobbie:** In 1986, our exports to the United States totalled \$12 billion. That represents one dollar out of every five in our western economy. One can see that the threat of increasing protectionism in the United States presents a terrifying prospect for our 7.5 million people.

On the other hand, liberalized trade opens the door to expanded markets. Think about Alberta and B.C., which are practically next door to California with its population of over 25 million nestled conveniently in a 4,000 square mile radius. I personally have done business in California.

If anyone thinks for one moment that we Canadians cannot compete in that market or that our products and our services cannot find markets there, then they should think again.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Ms. Dobbie:** I have found Californians to be more than receptive to Canadians. In fact, being a Canadian actually gave me an advantage in many cases because my California customers had a very deep-seated respect for Canadian quality and Canadian productivity.

Furthermore, many of them were intrigued by the idea of dealing with a Canadian company. They attached a certain glamour to our foreignness. The same held true for my experience in Washington, D.C., for my experience in Maryland, and for my experiences in New York. Canadian business people have a tremendous opportunity in these markets. Let me tell you, Madam Chairman, our American counterparts are no smarter, no sharper or no tougher than we are in business.

While I am at it, I would like to dispel some of the Opposition's myths about unfair competition from cheaper labour in the United States. In my personal experience it costs as much, and more, to employ people in California as it did in Manitoba, as it did in Ontario, as it did in Alberta or as it did in B.C. Contrary to some of the statements we have heard in this House, American workers are covered by most of the same benefits as are our workers in Canada. Instead of the state subsidizing these costs the burden falls directly on the employer. That means that his bottom line direct labour costs are often higher in Canada than they are in the United States.

The fact is that in the majority of cases, in real terms, labour is not cheaper in the United States. This is not

just my experience. A constituent of mine in Winnipeg South who owns an export business with a large distribution network tells me that the hourly rate that he pays for a warehouse worker in Minneapolis is \$26.75. Those are U.S. dollars. Another local company which just bought a branch plant in Georgia to complement its local production—and Georgia is the one we hear so much about—soon discovered that labour costs offered absolutely no advantage to doing business there. When the wages and benefits were added up and compared there was very little difference from what it cost to employ workers in Winnipeg. So much for the myths that we have heard perpetrated in this House.

So what an opportunity being next to California presents for British Columbia, where one out of every four jobs has the potential to be affected positively by the Free Trade Agreement. What a tremendous opportunity for Albertans to sell beef and to secure markets for their oil and gas. For Saskatchewan, free trade provides security for agriculture, for petroleum and mine exports. It creates a future for that province's small but diverse and steadily increasing manufactured output.

**The Assistant Deputy Chairman:** I apologize, but I must interrupt the Hon. Member at this time.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Assistant Deputy Chairman:** It being 1 p.m., it is my duty to rise, report progress, and request leave to consider the Bill again later this day.

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

Progress reported.

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** It being one o'clock, I do now leave the Chair until two o'clock this afternoon.

At 1 p.m., the House took recess.

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#### AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.