

The trade deal that we are debating tonight threatens the character of Saanich—Gulf Islands. This deal tells the farmers of my riding that they are expendable. How can the family farms of Saanich—Gulf Islands compete against the U.S. agri-business of Washington, Oregon, and California, agri-business which is backed by multinationals such as Exxon? The farmers of my riding are up against all that capital clout that such multinationals can wield against their competition, as well as by the year round growing season of California.

The Government states that there will be some dislocation by the Free Trade Agreement. That is Tory talk which means that those farms will be out of business, that the people of Saanich—Gulf Islands will be buying their fruits, vegetables, and dairy products from California and not from farms in their own communities.

In my work in international development I have seen what happens when a country becomes dependent upon a foreign power for its food supply. It leads to increased vulnerability. That is what the Government is inviting with this trade deal.

When the farmers of Saanich—Gulf Islands go out of business, the semi-rural character of our communities will be lost. It will not be cabbages and cauliflowers which will be growing on the Saanich peninsula, it will be condominiums.

This deal is more than a trade deal. It is more than about jobs, although I have already seen the detrimental effect that this deal will have on Canadian jobs.

In Saanich we are faced with American competition for computer contracts at the University of Victoria library. With this deal we are buying into a system that many of us find abhorrent.

In the recent election the issue of the environment was second only to the trade deal in importance. The two issues are intimately connected.

This trade deal is far more than a trade deal. It is an enormous step to the right to a more market-driven economy, away from the mixed economy that Canada has historically enjoyed. We have seen what the market has done to the environment in the United States, the market where the bottom line determines how the nation proceeds, where cost effectiveness is the primary criteria for a course of action.

We have seen the same mind-set in operation in British Columbia where clear cut logging the cost effective way is the way of doing things. We can no

longer afford this type of cost effectiveness. This Bill demonstrates the Government's naivety over confidence in market forces to cure all our ills.

Government Members assure us that this Bill is only a commercial arrangement. Do they consider that we are as naive as they? Do they not understand that a closer economic relationship leads to a closer political relationship; that adopting a market view of the world will lead to a fundamental shift in our values; that it will see the withering away of the independence of our foreign policy and the increased militarization of our country? I do not see this agreement in isolation from other policies introduced by the Government. It is dangerous to see this Bill in isolation. It is part of an agenda.

I want to assure the House and the people of Saanich—Gulf Islands that I will work strenuously to ameliorate the worst effects of this trade deal, to protect the farms, the environment, and the jobs in Saanich—Gulf Islands, and elsewhere in Canada, and to bring the Government the type of amendments that will make sense for all the people of Canada.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to have this opportunity to participate in what I think is a very historic debate on the free trade agreement. I view this agreement as both a culmination and a new beginning.

It is a culmination by the fact that we have been working in this country for the last 40 or 50 years on the elimination of trade barriers between Canada and the United States, our major trading partner. Starting from the original bilateral agreement in the 1930s and the formation of the GATT, through the GATT, and in other ways such as the Auto Pact, we have been developing ways in which we can trade more securely and in a more open way with the United States over the course of the past 40 years.

It is also a new beginning because it will give us an opportunity to take advantage of being a part of the largest, most prosperous, and most advanced market in the world today. I have talked to a number of people in different parts of the world at meetings of finance Ministers, and at other international meetings. The one thing that comes through clearly and positively is that people are saying that this is an opportunity of a lifetime for Canada. People see this as an opportunity for which they and other countries in the world would give their eye teeth.

I listened to the previous speaker, the Hon. Member for Saanich—Gulf Islands (Ms. Hunter), demonstrating