

Government Orders

The success of freer trade grounds of the GATT that extend over the past three decades, although perhaps invisible to many, did undeniably contribute massively to Canada's affluence.

The reason is that they were matched by effective and comprehensive adjustment assistance programs, following the precedents of the various GATT rounds. The Macdonald royal commission, in recommending the negotiation of a free trade agreement with the United States, urged repeatedly that any such agreement should be matched with comprehensive adjustment assistance in the form of training, retraining, investment incentives, the elimination of interprovincial trade barriers and so forth.

The government moved on the recommendation with regard to free trade with the United States, but it did not complete the other half of the agenda. It did not offer Canadians that comprehensive opportunity to benefit from adjustment assistance programs so as to make them the real beneficiaries of freer trade instead of victims.

Among those who now find themselves in that wholly unacceptable statistic of the 10 per cent or more unemployed there are many who understand as clearly as the economists what globalization means. They not only want to work, they want to work smarter and be more productive, but they cannot do it alone. Business has a role, as does organized labour, but it is the national government that must assist business and labour with that collaboration to make Canadians more efficient.

What is needed now more than ever is for the national government in collaboration with the provinces, businesses and labour to create the framework and the institutions within which Canadians can adapt to international change, when such change can generate employment and prosperity instead of unemployment and a national loss of confidence. This is what to a real degree any debate about free trade should be about.

In a post-industrial, post cold war environment we need to develop a global trade and competitiveness strategy. We have the opportunity to build the first truly global outward-oriented economy in North America, not by just reaching out to Mexico but by actively seeking freer trade agreements with our other major trading partners overseas such as Japan and the European

Community, but first we need to get the fundamentals right.

• (1220)

In this final act of the NAFTA drama, which we have before us today, we have the opportunity to write a very different conclusion from the one with which we were left in 1988. It will be evident to all Canadians that the opportunity to pursue a better agreement is available to this government, an opportunity has been opened in part by the initiative of the new United States administration in seeking parallel accords which will inevitably modify and change the nature of the treaty itself.

Why is it that this government is moving today to bring forward legislation to implement the North American free trade agreement without waiting, without discussing with Mexico and the United States the nature of those proposed parallel accords in areas which this side of the House has emphasized are important to Canada's future? I speak of the environment and labour standards.

This government has failed to take the opportunity presented by the change of administration in the United States to pursue Canada's own interests in seeking an agreement on a subsidies code, or more broadly, trading rules that would ensure Canadians are not subjected to the sort of trade harassment we have seen in recent years and would go a long way toward ensuring the freer trade environment from which all Canadians must ultimately benefit.

It is for that reason I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "That" and by substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-115, an act to implement the North American Free Trade Agreement, be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

Mr. Langlois: Madam Speaker, on a point of order.

With the unanimous consent of the House, I move that the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca be allowed 40 minutes to speak on the bill. While I am on my feet, I move that pursuant to Standing Order 26(1) the House continue to sit through the midday interruption today for the purpose of continuing consideration of Bill C-115, an act to implement the North American free trade agreement.