

minimum wages well below Canadian levels. Surely if free trade is going to make Canada a wealthier nation we should be able to afford higher standards.

Surely no one is going to be so bold as to suggest that in order to keep in world markets we must poison our environment, maim and injure our workers and consumers, and pay poverty wages to our workers.

These are legitimate concerns not only of my constituents but of most Canadians.

When Canadians were concerned that our precious water resources were being jeopardized by the Free Trade Agreement, the Government reluctantly reacted by amending the agreement. Surely since the concerns I have raised on behalf of Canadians are serious and the Government claims the agreement will not have these impacts, then the Government should be prepared to accept amendments which will reassure Canadians that their concerns and reservations on this Free Trade Agreement have been addressed.

Any attempt by the Government to limit legitimate debate and proposal of amendments will be a betrayal of the trust of citizens who have been lured into voting for the Government by the massive big business propaganda barrage.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (2310)

[Translation]

Mrs. Pierrette Venne (Saint-Hubert): Mr. Speaker, as a proud representative of the residents of my riding in this Chamber, and having the privilege of speaking on their behalf, I rise today to participate in this third reading debate on the Bill implementing the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States. Mr. Speaker, I must take this opportunity to extend my thanks to the voters of my riding of Saint-Hubert who elected me on November 21. They can rest assured that I will always be listening to them, as I did during the 51 days the election campaign lasted.

Mr. Speaker, I have no pretension of bringing to this Chamber a completely new point of view on the Free Trade Agreement.

This is partly because, as one of my colleagues indicated earlier, an extremely impressive number of hours have already been devoted to this proposal during the thirty-third Parliament and since the opening of this session, thus allowing many of us to express their wise opinions. However, Mr. Speaker, the Opposition Parties have repeatedly mentioned the fact that the numerous newly-elected Members of the House had not participated in the previous debates. First of all, Mr. Speaker, Opposition Members seem to have forgotten that thanks

to them, and because of their lies and the fearmongering that went on, the last election was centered on free trade.

As the new Member for Saint-Hubert, I wish to state very clearly that the residents of my riding support the Free Trade Agreement.

On November 21, they clearly indicated their consent, giving me a 10,400 vote majority.

Last week-end, I went to a few Christmas parties in my constituency, and the people were both surprised and amazed that the Opposition would try in the House to delay the passing of the free trade Bill. I could see amazement, Mr. Speaker, as they asked questions, and voiced their obvious dissatisfaction with the Opposition who does not want to admit that, on November 21, the people decided, and as one of my colleagues would say, *vox populi, vox Dei*.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to briefly describe the industrial structure of my constituency of Saint-Hubert. We have mainly small, but excessively dynamic businesses which have earned for themselves a good share of the market. Some of them are already exporting to the United States and other countries.

There is a variety of manufacturing industries in my constituency, making a wide range of products, including plastic mouldings, coffee-makers, lab equipment, steel wire, stairs and ramps, condensers and evaporators, kitchen furniture, clothing, and steel and aluminum containers.

In Saint-Hubert, we also have a Pratt & Whitney plant, building engines for airplanes and helicopters. You can also find in my riding the best aeronautics school in Canada, which offers courses in manufacturing, maintenance and aviation, and creates, with the Saint-Hubert airport, a unique infrastructure ensuring our economic development in years to come.

The Free Trade Agreement can only contribute to the expansion of this industrial complex which well deserves it. Mr. Speaker, the concept of free trade between Canada and the United States is not new. As a matter of fact, it has existed since before Confederation, having been founded in 1854. Since then, many successive attempts have been made to secure comprehensive agreements, including one in 1911 proposed by Sir Wilfrid Laurier. It is only after the Depression in 1935, that Canada and the United States would go about signing a whole series of treaties favouring free trade that would evolve in the course of the following 50 years.