

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, March 19, 1985

The House met at 11.00 a.m.

• (1105)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 62—NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION—
CANADA-UNITED STATES RELATIONS

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa) moved:

That this House condemns the Government's failure in bilateral relations with the United States with particular reference to:

1. the failure to obtain an agreement from the United States to make a commitment to early action on its share of environmental damage due to acid rain; and
2. the failure to make specific, that Canada would not participate in any way in the star wars project of the United States.

He said: Mr. Speaker, Canadians and Americans across the border have been witnessing what the media have dubbed as the Shamrock Conference. Some have said that nothing was involved in the process which took place over a 24-hour period in Quebec City but a lot of media hype. Would that this were true. Regrettably it is not. Canadians and Americans have in fact seen what could perhaps be accurately described as the "Shamrock Shuffle", with President Reagan calling the tune and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) eagerly dancing along, taking us as a nation in an entirely new direction in terms of our relationship with the United States of America.

The resolution before the House, Mr. Speaker, refers to the failure of this Government's bilateral relationships with the United States, with particular reference to the continental problem of acid rain and the immense global problem of President Reagan's star wars project and our link with it. The resolution does deal concretely with these two important instances, but the point I want to make is that what is involved goes well beyond even those two important items in its seriousness.

Our history as a nation can be seen in one sense as one long struggle against assimilation. There has been throughout the time those of us in this Chamber have lived, as well as our ancestors, a tension between the conflicting poles of nationalism on the one hand and continentalism on the other.

It is a very interesting point of Canadian history that the Conservative Party, since Sir John A. Macdonald, on virtually every issue of substance during a time when it was the Government, has been on the nationalist side. Sir John A.

Macdonald gave to Canada a new national policy. Robert Borden fought the Liberals of the day on the issue of reciprocity for what he deemed to be the Canadian interest. Bennett in the 1930s produced for Canada the CBC and Air Canada, standing up for what he perceived to be Canadian national interests in a continent which was dominated by the economic power and thrust of the United States of America. John Diefenbaker fought the campaign of 1957 on the issue of Canadian economic nationalism. He talked about the importance of Canadian control in certain key sectors of the Canadian economy. I would add, in relation to what is taking place in Central America today, that it was John Diefenbaker who resisted the pressures from the United States in 1959 to cut off relations with the new Government of Cuba. It was John Diefenbaker, although there was some confusion on his policy in this regard because he was a Canadian nationalist and sensitive to the growing dangers of the proliferation of nuclear weapons, who, in the final analysis, refused to take nuclear weapons for the Bomarc missiles here in Canada.

Now there is a new kind of Conservatism. Since the election of September 4 we have witnessed what I would describe as a decisive shift in the history of the Conservative Party and, so far as they are able to get away with it, in the history of our country. The election of September 4 was the crowning point of the North American neo-conservative continentalist movement that began in the 1970s and scored its first victory in 1980 with the election of President Reagan, and put the icing on the cake with the election of Brian Mulroney in Canada.

[Translation]

What has happened since the election? We have witnessed the impact of the Government's continentalism. First, they terminated FIRA. Then they made cutbacks in funding for the arts. What is the result for the economy? Since September, the Conservatives have simply approved all FIRA applications still pending.

Then came the summit. Two basic issues were on the agenda. First of all, acid rain and the damage it does to our buildings, the air we breathe, the water in our lakes, and our forests. Initially, President Reagan only had a report in mind—

• (1110)

[English]

But, Mr. Speaker, Brian got tough. In the earlier days of negotiations leading up to the summit meeting in Quebec City, he said through his officials: "Ronnie, a report is not good enough. The people of Canada are sensitive to the need for