

Supply

when we talk about so-called freer trade, we really are talking about a number of facets that affect our culture, our national identity, our activity in general well beyond just the question of trade. Maybe not in 10 years or 20 years, but maybe in 50 years I fear that what we are really talking about with the words "freer trade" will be something that could be determined as economic union.

I am very worried about this possibility. We cannot limit an integration on this continent in terms of trade. We cannot just reduce it to trade alone, for the reason that I mentioned a moment ago. Many other walks of life and many other activities would be affected. You cannot draw the line on trade alone, as has been the experience in Europe in the last two or three decades as a result of the economic unity that has taken place there.

There are measures that affect jobs and the livelihood of Canadians that flow from this initiative of free trade talks. There are aspects related to the environment that I would like to raise briefly in the limited time available. There is one aspect that flows from the national treatment policy that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) elaborated upon in a statement a few weeks ago.

National treatment is a technical term indicating that one country will give the other the same domestic treatment that it gives at home for the policies that it implements in relation to trade. To put it in a very descriptive way, the Prime Minister said: "Goods from Manitoba will be treated exactly the same as goods from Minnesota". That puts it very clearly. One may ask, for instance, how the very important initiative of shipping western coal to eastern Canada will be affected through the adoption of a national treatment policy. This was raised as a significant initiative and measure that would have some significant positive effect on the environment. Evidently the answer is that it could not be put into place in Canada. We could not go ahead as we would under the present conditions by shipping western Canadian coal to eastern Canada, unless we also extended the same treatment to the high-sulphur Virginia coal, which is environmentally undesirable, as a result of this specific national treatment referred to as one of our main pillars in the negotiations.

Therefore, there is reason to conclude that environmental protection could be seriously endangered if we were to conclude a free trade agreement that included a national treatment as one of its mainstays. By virtue of this example, this would have the effect of not permitting us to proceed with the utilization of western Canadian coal, which would permit us to create jobs in large numbers—up to, I am told, some 200,000 jobs—because of the rules that would have to be respected under the national treatment.

That is not all. In the management of the environment, a study was conducted on environment and free trade by the Canadian Environmental Advisory Council. It was published in June of this year. So far the Government has been completely silent about it. In that study, three basic thoughts are put forward as pre-conditions that would have to be put on

the table by Canada in relation to the environment in the evolution of our negotiating position. The first one is:

Canada's ability to manage a renewable and non-renewable resource use—must not be compromised and should if possible be enhanced through negotiation.

The second point made by the Canadian Environmental Advisory Council is:

Canada's ability to control pollution and waste disposal through similar strategies must not be compromised, and should if possible be enhanced through negotiation.

Finally, the principle that:

Canada's ability to protect natural ecosystems, including components such as habitats, wilderness, and endangered species, must not be compromised and should, if possible, be enhanced through negotiation.

Now, what in essence is the Canadian Environmental Advisory Council saying here? It is saying that once you enter a North American continental policy position or situation of free trade, you could have situations whereby certain companies, particularly the multinationals, demand the removal of certain environmental control standards in order to be more competitive with companies south of the border.

Mr. Speaker, I see that you are indicating to me that my time is up. I will perhaps leave the elaboration of this point to another occasion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions or comments.

Mr. Brisco: I have listened with interest to the remarks and statements by the Hon. Member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia). I would like to ask him to respond to two or three points. He was criticizing us earlier in his speech because we had sought the views and the policy considerations of the opposition Parties. I understand that the role of the Opposition is to oppose. However, I think it is also understood, and one only need read the contribution to debate by the Hon. Member for Qu'Appelle—Moose Mountain (Mr. Hamilton), when he sat in Opposition, to clearly understand that it is not unusual for the Opposition to offer additional suggestions or counter-proposals which are of merit. In seeking those out, it is the role of the Government to inquire of the Opposition about its positive contribution, rather than the Opposition devoting its entire time to criticism.

The Member for Davenport also made reference to the dismantling of FIRA and accused us of destroying something of value. It was FIRA that destroyed something of value, the entire petroleum industry and the way of life in Alberta. If the Hon. Member has any doubts, I ask him to read the admission by the Minister at the time responsible for that fiasco.

Mr. Axworthy: It's really prosperous now, you guys. It's really doing a lot!

• (1730)

Mr. Brisco: You will have your turn, Mr. Axworthy.