

*Government Orders*

This program follows through the recommendations in the action plan of the prosperity initiative steering group. The action plan urged the government to make greater efforts to develop markets abroad. We are doing this.

Access North America will help make NAFTA work for Canada's benefit. It will help Canadians display their products and services at a permanent trade centre in Mexico City. It will help Canadians become better acquainted with the Mexican market through a program known as NewMex.

[English]

Yet what would my hon. friends opposite do? They would deny Canadians all the opportunities of this market and some of them would tear up not just the NAFTA but the free trade agreement as well. They have no vision of their own. They have no plan of action for Canada to play an important role in the global economy. They have no understanding of the impact of their actions on the economy and no confidence in the ability of Canadians to compete and take advantage of these markets as they have demonstrated over the past four years under the free trade agreement with the United States.

The opposition parties counsel withdrawal. They do not want an active Canada involved in the world. They want a catatonic Canada. For the benefit of my colleagues opposite that means putting Canada in a trance or a seizure with loss of sensation or consciousness. They want Canada to stagnate as a backwater.

Their policies would amount to planned paralysis, or worse, to the reckless abandonment of our largest trade relationship. They like to quote Gordon Ritchie from time to time. He was the deputy chief negotiator for the free trade agreement who said: "Those who want to rip up the free trade agreement say you cannot unscramble an egg".

One cannot go back to four years ago and put the companies that made the adjustment and that are taking advantage of the successes that are there into a position where they have the tariff and non-tariff barriers that were there before and upset the changes in investment that they have made since that time.

What would the opposition be saying if we had not joined the NAFTA negotiations? We would be under

attack. We would be criticized by many of them for letting the United States march into the Mexican market while we sat passively and paralyzed on the side and sitting on our hands. You can hear them now, Madam Speaker.

Many in the opposition would have undoubtedly accused us of putting our industries at risk and of freezing them out of a prime commercial opportunity. They would have charged us with undermining Canada's drawing powers of location for investment. They would have condemned us for refusing to defend Canada's interests, but they cannot do that because we in this government did the right thing. We saw the future and wanted our rightful part in that future.

• (1135)

When the bill before us today is approved, it will lead us into the 21st century. One of the fundamental concerns of the next century will be the relationship between the developed and developing worlds.

I want to direct my comments to those in the New Democratic Party because this is of particular relevance to positions they have taken in the past. The NAFTA offers a positive prototype for those relations. Aid to the world's developing nations has too often realized only small and isolated victories in the war on poverty over the last 50 years. The developing nations increasingly admonish the developed world to realize that trade, not aid, is the key to a richer future.

[Translation]

Developing countries want the freedom to sell their goods and services on world markets, and to be able to buy goods and services and attract the investment that the developed world has to offer. This is the acknowledged key to their future development and prosperity. It is also essential for the developed world's continuing prosperity and to international peace and stability.

Greater trade and greater economic interdependence can defuse the resentment and envy that have too often been responsible in the past for international disorders ranging from famine to terrorism. Trade is a powerful antidote to conflict and a powerful support to international order. I say unambiguously that free trade is good foreign policy.