

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Mr. McDermid: Those negotiations go on.

Mr. Langdon: Instead, it said that it will take five to seven years to negotiate it, and that five to seven years will leave us in a much weaker position to get any sort of justice with respect to subsidies. Once more, it is a failure, the third failure of this Bill.

There is a fourth failure too. The Government said that culture would be exempted. Yet for the first time, we have explicitly said to the United States that it can retaliate against us with respect to anything we do in the cultural area. There are certain limits on how much it can retaliate, but it has the right to retaliate. We as a country have never before put into words our recognition that the United States could retaliate against us for anything we felt was necessary to protect Canadian culture.

There is no exemption for agriculture. The Minister of State for Finance (Mr. Hockin) chaired a committee which said that there should be an exemption for agriculture. No, the Government failed to get that. There is no exemption for regional development programs. Regional development programs will be part of the five to seven years of negotiations about subsidies, about what is acceptable and what is not. We have already had the Deputy Minister of Finance at the time tell us that we will have to change our regional development programs as a consequence. There is a failure in that area as well.

• (1840)

There is a failure, too, with respect to the Auto Pact. The Auto Pact was not going to be touched. It, too, said the committee chaired by the Minister of State for Finance, was to be exempted from negotiations.

Mr. McDermid: It was strengthened.

Mr. Langdon: They failed on that one, too. We could take the list of virtually everything they said they were out to get with this trade deal and we would find that they have failed to get what they sought. Now they have the effrontery, through the Minister this morning, to come before the House and say that we on the opposition side are somehow being unCanadian in attacking this lousy deal. Well, everyone who accepts this kind of record of failure in negotiations frankly should be ashamed of themselves. They should come before this House not with the kind of bluster of the Minister for International Trade this morning but with a shameful look on their face and say: "I am sorry for having misled the House of Commons for so many weeks".

We heard the Government earlier say that this agreement is no threat to international trade, no threat to our relations under GATT. Yet that absolute nonsense was rejected by everyone I talked to from other countries at the start of this GATT round of negotiations.

Mr. McDermid: Did you talk to the G-7?

Mr. Langdon: The Parliamentary Secretary was not there so he did not happen to hear. Most of the G-7 had people there, as the Parliamentary Secretary would know.

Mr. McDermid: They are supporting it there.

Mr. Langdon: The point is that regional blocks like the European Common Market, like the kind of regional block this agreement would set up between the U.S. and Canada, will lead to more protectionism in the future. That is what is likely to happen as regional blocks with powerful markets fight each other and then start protecting each other as a consequence. It is not just by chance that we had in the same summer the U.S. Congress accepting the trade deal with Canada and undertaking through the omnibus trade Bill a much more protectionist piece of legislation than anything we have seen from the U.S. before.

We can continue with what this Bill says it deems itself to be, what the Government describes it to be, and what in fact it is. It says that there has been no change with respect to lumber exports. Of course, it has put into writing that shameful, degrading commitment that we accepted under duress by the U.S. with respect to our softwood lumber exports. We accepted that 15 per cent tax which is hurting lumber workers right across this country.

Mr. McDermid: Oh, yes, with record profits, too. Tell me how badly we are doing.

Mr. Langdon: Health care is not touched, the Government says, yet there are parts of this agreement, as anyone who has read it carefully knows, detailed ways in which health care is very significantly affected.

Mr. McDermid: You are out to lunch.

Mr. Langdon: I put it to the people of Canada—

Mr. McDermid: You certainly would.

Mr. Langdon:—that they should reject this agreement and choose instead a new direction, a direction based on fairness, honesty, open leadership, a direction which would take us to something far better than this lousy trade deal the Government has signed.

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

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I have listened for the last 20 minutes to the Hon. Member of the NDP like I listened to the Liberal Party trade critic for about two hours. Both spent their time criticizing, knocking, saying how terrible the free trade agreement was. Not one of them suggested an alternative. For two hours we sat and listened to the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) and now the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon) and it was knock, knock, knock. The Canadian people know what you are against. The Canadian people want to know what you are for.