

Hon. Edward Broadbent, NDP (Oshawa)

“I think we should try and obtain sectorial agreements with the United States that would benefit both parties.”

We of the New Democratic Party agree that the United States is and always will be our most important trading partner. Ninety per cent of our exports now enter the United States duty free. That is the situation today, and I think we should try and obtain sectorial agreements with the United States that would benefit both parties. We have one example the Prime Minister has often referred to in the past, namely the Auto Pact, and if we can have similar agreements in other sectors, we would like to take this particular one as a model.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I say we should try and establish a process for settling bilateral disputes so as to restrict the arbitrary levying of compensatory measures by both parties.

Mr. Speaker, I am saying restrict, not eliminate altogether.

It seems to me that in any trade arrangement with the Americans, if we want to protect our sovereignty and respect their sovereignty, it will be impossible, and ought to be impossible, for us to eliminate entirely the right of either nation at some point to take countervailing action against the other.

We in this Party believe in the sovereignty of Canada and the ultimate obligation we have to make the economic decisions which affect our people, and we know that that is reciprocal. So at some time if we say that we have the right to take economic actions to protect the interests of our people, then we must concede right away that we could not expect the United States to eliminate entirely the right to take action to protect its own citizens. That is a given.

Having said that, I also want to add that we believe that, in addition to expanding trade with the United States, which I have already said is our most important trading partner, we have to make great efforts to expand trade with other countries.

In terms of job creation and economic growth, we must begin as a nation to make a serious effort to get away from the massive dependence that we now have on the export of resources and semi-processed goods, whether it be to the United States or to other countries.

The reality is that, compared with other industrial or quasi-industrial nations, we have a disproportionate amount of foreign ownership in our economy.