

Adjournment Debate

would have been implemented, but the elections did intervene and then the government was faced with a serious deficit problem.

To this day still the same Senate—friends of our distinguished colleague on the other side of the House—is sitting on an outstanding piece of legislation for women, Bill C-21 which extends maternity leave precisely to help women care for their children before sending them to day care centres.

I do not understand the hon. member. He must have been reluctant to rise because he knew full well I would refer to these two issues. Well, it does provide me with an opportunity to remind him that the government to which I am honoured to belong is proud of the achievements that have highlighted the last five years with respect to equity for women: our legislation on employment equity; our initiatives concerning family violence and child sex abuse; the famous Bill C-21 which I just mentioned and which extends maternity leave; measures to enforce maintenance and support orders; and legislation to improve women's access to training programs.

• (1810)

Moreover, we have put in place programs to encourage business women, we have taken initiatives to support women farmers and we have opened to women virtually all positions and occupations in the Canadian Armed Forces.

Madam Speaker, I will tell the hon. member for Cape Breton—Richmond—East that our prime minister and our government have indicated clearly their intention to fulfill their commitments towards child care before the end of this mandate and this time, hopefully, the hon. member will tell his colleagues in the other place that he will not tolerate again either that the Senate opposes such an important bill for Canadian women.

[English]

TRADE

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Madam Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to return the attention of the House to the matter I raised last October.

I pointed out at that time that trade statistics pointed to the fact that there was a great imbalance between the trade balance of the U.S. and the trade balance of

Canada. The figures released that month showed that our trade surplus was in sharp decline. Our exports to the U.S. had increased by some 3.4 per cent, while our imports from the U.S. had doubled to almost 7.5 per cent.

I wish I could say that things had changed for the better since that time but, quite frankly, they have not.

There was another decline in the real merchandise trade balance in the fourth quarter of 1989. In fact, Canada posted a deficit of some \$1.9 billion in its real merchandise balance of trade. It was the first such deficit since the end of 1956.

At the time I asked my question, the Minister of Finance responded with his usual response that our falling trade balance was caused by our increased imports of machinery and equipment from the United States. The minister's response failed to tell the whole story and failed to give adequate consideration to the concerns that Canadians voice when they see these types of figures.

Canadian imports from the U.S. are up, while our exports to the U.S. are down. In February of this year Canadian exports to the U.S. fell by \$12 million, while imports from the U.S. rose by some \$353 million. That same month our monthly trade balance with the U.S. worsened by some \$365 million. While Canada's trade balance deteriorates, the U.S. monthly trade balance has improved to its best level since 1983.

What is happening to the Canadian economy is troublesome. But what is happening to the Canadian worker is just unfair. We are posting declines in our trade surpluses and, in some cases, outright trade deficits, the likes of which have never been seen since 1982 and, in some other cases, not since 1956.

These figures have a lot more to do with the free trade agreement than the government would like to admit. There was a recent article on the free trade agreement in the *U.S. News and World Report* which put it like this: "On the trade front, America appears to have won the first round".

In the first round, hundreds of Canadians have lost their jobs. In the first round, Canada has become a nation of take-overs, mergers and acquisitions. In the first half of 1989 alone take-overs soared by some 31 per cent.