

*Government Orders*

[English]

**Mr. Jim Silye (Calgary Centre, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I hope to stick to Bill C-105 and keep it kind of short.

**Some hon. members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Silye:** That is the second time in two years I have been applauded by members opposite; I appreciate it.

The purpose of Bill C-105 is to implement the tax conventions between Canada and the republics of Latvia, Estonia, Trinidad and Tobago and a protocol between Canada and the republic of Hungary for the avoidance of double taxation and the prevention of income tax evasion.

It is just like Bill S-9. We are here debating bills and for all intents and purposes they are already done deals. The agreements have already been signed by the bureaucrats and diplomats and now we have to give them a formal blessing. We have spent two days doing that. It is important to do it, so let us get on with the business of getting it done.

Tax treaties like this one along with their amending protocols have two main purposes: the elimination of double taxation on goods, services and people that flow back and forth across borders and the prevention of fiscal evasion by the same people. The treaties and protocols being signed are patterned on the model of the double taxation convention prepared by the OECD. That is supposed to be our guarantee that everything in here is wonderful, good for everybody, and we do not even have to look into the details. The Reform Party supports these and any initiatives that help eliminate barriers to the globalization of our economy.

• (1340)

However, in the debate on Bill C-105 I noticed when the parliamentary secretary to the finance minister made his presentation on the bill today that he said there was nothing contentious in the bill. That almost made me want to look into it and reread it, as if he were trying to hide some of the sneaky little deals found in Bill S-9 that the member for Gander—Grand Falls pointed out. That Liberal member pointed out how bad Bill S-9 was, that it was not really a Liberal bill, and that he was disappointed the Liberal Party could support it.

That brings me to another point on the Liberal government. It struck me interesting in reviewing and researching protocol bills and tax concession bills between countries how the Liberal government had flip-flopped on its anti-free trade policies of the past. It is actually approving bills that lower taxes. It is actually approving bills that eliminate the barriers to trade. It is actually doing something they were against when in opposition and we are for.

It makes me wonder whether the finance minister is in charge or the deputy minister is in charge who worked for the Conserva-

tive government? Which set of people, which grouping, the politicians or the bureaucrats, is in charge of the government?

In 1991 when the finance minister was in opposition he gave his opinion on trade conventions, treaties and tax concession conventions. What did he ask the government to do? What did he say to ensure the deals were in the best interests of all Canadians? To put it in context, when in opposition the finance minister in referring to the Conservative government said, as indicated in *Hansard*:

In the free trade agreement this government, so desperate for a success even if it was only paper thin, and so afraid of failure, sat down cowardly with the Americans and gave up the ghost before negotiations started.

**An hon. member:** Shame.

**Mr. Martin:** It made every single concession. Every point it thought the Americans would raise at the table, it gave up before it got there, because this indeed is a craven government.

He was referring to Bill S-9, what we approved yesterday. He was criticizing the very bill that was passed in substantially the same form. He did not agree that the Conservative government was headed in the right direction.

That borders on the hypocritical. If a member who criticizes something vehemently and strongly in opposition has the chance to change it, to improve it, to fix it or to make it better when in power, he or she should do so. But the government goes along and in the course of the last two years has basically passed about 10 Conservative bills substantially in the form that were on the shelf gathering dust. Its members just took them off the shelf, blew off the dust, presented them in the House, put Liberal on them, and now they are being passed.

I am sure some members of the Liberal government are deeply hurt because their party said in the past that it would never cut the deficit on the backs of the sick or the poor and this is exactly what it is now doing.

The Liberals are cutting and transferring the debt from the federal government to the provincial governments. They are cutting health care and welfare services by \$7 billion and are calling it the social transfer bill or whatever. This is what they said they would not do.

There have to be some Liberals over there who are hurting, who are bleeding internally, because they are losing their roots. They are losing what they are supposed to be doing in terms of protecting the people who elected them. They are not protecting them. They are going against their wishes. They are breaking a lot of the promises they made in the red book.

During the election they said on free trade that they did not like NAFTA and that they would renegotiate.

**Mr. Mills (Broadview—Greenwood):** This is not free trade.

**Mr. Assadourian:** Stick to the subject.