

*Free Trade*

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) may be wondering whether, when the staple came off, some of the signatures came off as well.

**Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill):** Mr. Speaker, I will not speak to that point, but I am glad that the Member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon) found nothing wrong with any of the petitions presented by the New Democratic Party caucus.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Chair appreciates interventions by all Hon. Members on this matter. The Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) and all Hon. Members will be properly aided in their presentation of petitions by the knowledge that occasionally other Hon. Members do count the number of signatures on a petition. It is probably appropriate now to call for Orders of the Day.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### TRADE

#### CANADA—U.S. FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

**Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade)** moved:

That this House endorse, as being in the national interest, the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement, the legal text of which was tabled in the House of Commons on Friday, December 11, 1987.

**Mr. Riis:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Before we begin this important debate, I wonder whether you would consider seeking the unanimous consent of the House to allow the spokesperson for the New Democratic Party to have ample time to speak as will the speakers for the Government and the Official Opposition.

**Mr. Lewis:** Agreed.

**Mr. Speaker:** I want to thank the Hon. Minister of State for immediately indicating agreement. I am looking to the Official Opposition; there is agreement there in accordance with the usual courtesies in this place. I thank the Hon. Member for raising the matter. The Hon. Minister has the floor.

**Miss Carney:** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased today to be able to rise and speak to the motion:

That this House endorse, as being in the national interest, the Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement, the legal text of which was tabled in the House of Commons on Friday, December 11, 1987.

I am sure all Members of the House will agree that it was a truly historic moment when the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) tabled, after two years of effort, the free trade agreement with the U.S.

The Opposition is spending a great deal of time outlining what the free trade agreement is not. That is seen in the petitions which were tabled today by Members of the Opposition. As an example, the petition tabled by the Member for

Vancouver East (Ms. Mitchell) said that the free trade agreement struck at the very fabric of Canadian society.

This is a trade agreement, Mr. Speaker. It is a big trade agreement between two countries. It does not strike at the very fabric of our society. Our country was built on trade from the earliest days of settlement. We are among the world's top traders. The jobs of three million Canadians depend on trade. It is clear that the free trade agreement, which is aimed at liberalizing and increasing trade, is very much in the national interest.

The Member for Vancouver East also said erroneously that the free trade agreement will increase foreign ownership in energy. That is simply not true. The provisions with regard to energy in the agreement very clearly protect Canadian ownership. There is nothing in the free trade agreement that would in any way increase foreign ownership in energy.

• (1130)

Then we have the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin) in his petition talking again about what the free trade agreement is not. The Hon. Member in his petition talks about the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs. Let me remind the Hon. Member how wrong they have been in the past. Only one year ago we were in the House discussing the subject of softwood lumber. At that time we were negotiating a tax with the U.S. which we would impose in lieu of a countervail in order that we could collect the funds required here in Canada and leave the provinces free to manage their resources on their own timetable. This is something that we have accomplished and will be announcing shortly as B.C. moves to deal with the softwood lumber issue.

It is worth noting that at that time the provincial NDP and the IWA, the forestry union, supported us on softwood lumber. The Opposition stated that there would be hundreds of thousands of jobs lost. I wish to point out the news contained in the softwood lumber industry study prepared by the IWA, the very union that supported us, the very union that the workers, which states, "The massive job losses which many Canadian observers believed would surely result from the imposition of the 15 per cent export tax on softwood lumber . . . simply have not occurred". The report goes on to state, "Altogether 600 sawmill jobs were added in British Columbia during that period", because, of course, Canadian production during the first eight months of 1987 exceeded records, according to this report.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Miss Carney:** The IWA union report further states, "A check on the few mill closures that have been announced throughout Canada during 1987 reveals that they were caused by a number of factors, including severe shortages of economically priced timber and outdated, inefficient sawmill facilities. In no instance that we know of can the export tax be directly blamed as the sole cause of closure. And in one or two cases closed mills have been slated for reopening with new options