

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

aspect, either by the Macdonald Commission on the Canadian Economy or by the present Government, at least studies that it would have made public and that we could have gone over. And since the service sector is the most important in our economy—70 per cent of jobs and two thirds of our gross national product come from Canadian services sold abroad—leaving our services in this Agreement is disastrous, as I said before, because it is inconceivable that the Government went ahead without knowing what might happen, without knowing the consequences of this.

The whole data processing sector, for example, is involved. According to the Independent Computer Services Association of Canada, this major Canadian organization, 360,000 jobs in data processing could be affected and maybe even eliminated by American competition which, as it knows, will have a free hand here in Canada. So in the service sectors, Mr. Speaker, we will lose, and in trade in goods, we will also lose.

I come back to paragraph (b):

facilitate conditions of fair competition within the free-trade area established by the Agreement;

Mr. Speaker, that presupposes that appropriate dispute-settlement mechanisms will be in place. No, U.S. law will still be ever-present to prevent us from being able to compete in that market and the only purpose of the dispute-settlement mechanism is to see that American law has been properly applied. There is nothing there to benefit us. Americans will still have the right to impose excessive tariffs on goods exported to the U.S. market and they will also see to it that tariff provisions are in place to encourage their own industries and discourage ours.

Mr. Speaker, I fail to see how we can convince Canadians that the purpose of this agreement is to:

b) facilitate conditions of fair competition within the free-trade area established by the Agreement;

Liberalize significantly conditions for investment within that free-trade area.

I read carefully what they say about investment. We are told there will be a free flow of investment. Furthermore, Canada has agreed not to introduce policies requiring companies that are the subject of foreign takeovers to remain Canadian-owned. We spoke earlier about the screening mechanism we have in this country to control foreign takeovers in our industry, trade and services.

Mr. Speaker, we all know the Tories got rid of FIRA, the Foreign Investment Review Agency. We have no more room to manoeuvre, we have no more control, and on top of that, this Government welcomes foreign takeovers in the financial sector. Foreigners can buy whatever they want in this country, including our advanced energy sectors, like any other industry in this country.

Mr. Speaker, the same rights and privileges enjoyed by Canadian companies will therefore be available or more readily available to American companies. American banks will

have full access to Canada, while Canadian banks will be subject to State banking laws, and as we know, Mr. Speaker, all fifty States have their own legislation in this area. It will be practically impossible or at least very difficult for our banks to break into the U.S. market, while Americans will be able to come to Canada with no difficulty whatsoever and do as they please in the banking sector. A double standard if there ever was one! We will be hard pressed to break into the American market, and meanwhile, they get the red carpet treatment!

Mr. Speaker, the clause goes on:

d) establish effective procedures for the joint administration of the Agreement and the resolution of disputes;

Mr. Speaker, I referred to this earlier, and I don't think we can take this seriously. As far as I can see, the dispute settlement procedure will not consider or protect our Canadian interests.

Mr. Speaker, finally, Clause 3 says, and I quote:

e) lay the foundations for further bilateral and multilateral cooperation to expand and enhance the benefits of the Agreement;

Mr. Speaker, what did we get? Not much, as I said before. Just that from now on, Americans may find it easier to come here than they did under the previous Government, to take advantage of our immense resources, our financial sector and our industries . . . When all is said and done, Mr. Speaker, we caved in, and we are about to pass legislation that will literally sell out this country for a pittance. If we analyse the situation, it is clear that very little in the way of trade is involved. Today, only 20 per cent of our goods are not traded freely. Today, 80 per cent of the goods between our two countries are duty free. To reduce the duty on the remaining 20 per cent, and we agree with the decision to reduce customs duty on these goods, this Government has sold out our industry, our energy sector, our mines, our resources and it may have compromised what constitutes the foundation of this country, the future of Canadians and handed over our sovereignty to another country. To me, Mr. Speaker, that is not a good thing.

● (2040)

[English]

Mr. Stan J. Hovdebo (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, this series of amendments is very important to those people who have concerns about the authority and the ability which they have to control their own destiny in Canada. Clause 3 states the objectives of the agreement, and I will speak about those a little later. Clause 4 makes the legislation binding on Her Majesty's Government. Clause 6 gives the federal Government authority to pass legislation that it thinks is required to implement this Bill, legislation very much like Bill C-130.

It is amazing that the same provincial Premiers who supported and applauded the Meech Lake Accord, because it gave them more autonomy and more provincial power, are in many cases from provinces like Saskatchewan, British Columbia and Québec. Those who applauded and supported