

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

open in negotiation. The way the Conservative Government has always weakly caved in to American pressure on any issue, the way it has weakly agreed to a thoroughly bad deal with the United States on trade, indicates that if in the unlikely event it continues in office it will cave in on a definition of subsidies which will put our social programs, pensions, unemployment insurance, and medicare in peril.

Only the acceptance of these amendments by the Government will provide at least some partial answers to the concerns I have stated. I do not think the Government will accept these amendments. Therefore this is a powerful reason to defeat this deal here in Parliament but, more important, to defeat this deal through an early election.

**Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague, the Liberal House Leader, in the last 10 minutes and of course on Tuesday night when we were debating these series of amendments. I listened to all the fearmongering, the scare tactics that have been dug up by members of the Opposition on this particular agreement. In the few minutes allotted to me in this particular section I will attempt to answer some of the concerns that have been expressed.

I chuckled to myself when I heard the Hon. House Leader stand up to say that the Government should put its money where its mouth is. He is the Member of Parliament who in the last Parliament said that he would resign his seat if interest rates went up. They went up to 22 per cent. For him to be telling us to put our money where our mouth is is somewhat amusing when listening to his speech.

**Mr. Gray (Windsor West):** I made no such statement in the last Parliament.

**Mr. McDermid:** The next thing I want to mention is that the series of amendments we are debating would put something into the Act to say that it is not in the agreement. Members opposite want to put something in the Act to say that it is not in the Act. This really boggles my mind. I cannot understand what they are trying to do. The Hon. House Leader talks about his Party's policy on trade—GATT. He said that we will deal with the Americans through GATT. They have negotiated a number of GATT rounds. Did they put anything in about aboriginal rights in those GATT rounds? Did they put anything in about health care? Did they put anything in about regional development? Did they put anything in about social programs? Of course they did not.

**Mr. Axworthy:** We did not have to because we were not threatening them.

**Mr. McDermid:** I give an example of an agreement that we all understand because most people, most families, have at one time or another bought themselves a home or have been involved in such an agreement. When one signs an agreement to sell or buy a house, one does not put in the agreement that the wife and kids are not part of the agreement. The point is

not put in that the car is not part of the agreement. What one puts in the agreement is what will be affected. It is the same with the trade agreement.

I want to go through the motions because of the scaremongering about this country going to hell in a handbasket. I do not think there is a Canadian who honestly believes that any Government, no matter what its political stripe, would endanger our social programs, our medicare, our education, and so on. It is absolute foolishness to try to frighten the people that way.

Aboriginal peoples are mentioned in these amendments. The rights of aboriginal peoples and their land claim settlements have constitutional protection. The free trade agreement does not supersede the Constitution. The Government's comprehensive land claims policy, which was revised last year, is grandfathered in the free trade agreement. There is no need to put forward an exception.

There is nothing in the free trade agreement that would affect programs to protect the environment. We are working under GATT rules. Under GATT rules the environment is protected. This free trade agreement comes under the GATT rules and that is very clear all through it.

**Ms. Copps:** That is absolute garbage.

**Mr. McDermid:** There is the expert from Hamilton East. She is the expert on everything—absolutely everything. She knows everything about everything. She is wonderful.

Existing statutes and policies regarding protection of the environment continue to apply. They have absolutely nothing to do with the agreement—nothing.

**Ms. Copps:** That is what you said about senior citizens' pensions. Your word is not worth the paper it is written on.

**Mr. McDermid:** There is nothing in the agreement that would prevent the Government from undertaking appropriate adjustment programs—absolutely nothing.

**Ms. Copps:** What about the grape growers?

**Mr. McDermid:** We have announced an adjustment program for the grape growers in British Columbia, and there is a soon to be announced program in Ontario, once the Ontario Government gets its act together.

**Ms. Copps:** Who introduced the deal?

**Mr. McDermid:** Who did the unfair, discriminatory pricing, as has been determined by GATT in Ontario and British Columbia? There is a great supporter of GATT. As soon as GATT brings down a decision against Canada all of a sudden GATT is terrible. We are to ignore it and not pay any attention to it. That is the Hon. Member for Hamilton East. She really understands this thing.