GATT is thus both a framework of rules and a forum in which countries can discuss and resolve their trade problems and negotiate in large world trade opportunities.

The tenfold growth in the volume of world trade over the last four decades has provided continuing evidence of the GATT success in this double role. There are now 99 members of GATT and No. 100 is on the horizon. The GATT is the cornerstone of Canadian trade policy. Canada was one of the 23 founding members of the GATT agreement, and our membership in it has served Canadians well over the many years. Canada relies on international trade for its economic well-being. We are a trading country. Trade represents some 30 per cent of our GNP and roughly three million Canadians depend on trade for their livelihood. In addition, exports generate about $5,000 a year for every man, woman and child in Canada.

This motion implies that any time that a GATT ruling finds any of our policies inconsistent with the general agreement, Canada should simply ignore the ruling, or as the motion rather mysteriously puts it, to take action against the ruling. But what would we be taking action against? The GATT? The GATT is not only an international agreement, but a forum composed of its members, who are our most important trading partners. So the motion really says that any time that Canadian policies are found to be GATT-inconsistent, we should make a unilateral decision to take action against our trading partners.

The problem with this is that, although Canada is a significant trader of some products on a global basis, we are, in over-all terms, a middle-sized economy and trader. This leads inescapably to the fact that we must depend on strong and predictable international trade rules to provide a secure basis for our export sales. Our free trade agreement with the United States is built upon the GATT. A strong GATT is the best security for Canadian trade and the related jobs. We cannot expect to use the GATT rules to provide a solid base for Canadian economic growth if we ourselves are not prepared to live by these rules.

No country can expect to win every challenge to its practices under the GATT and Canada is no exception. The number of dispute settlement cases in the GATT is tending to increase and this should be no surprise to anyone. In various countries around the world, new and sometimes complex rules and regulations are put into place which have trade-restrictive effects which are questionable in terms of GATT consistency, and thus come under challenge. In other cases, old or traditional policies, such as Canada's former ban on exporting unprocessed Pacific salmon and herring, are challenged. The GATT dispute settlement system has worked as much in Canada's favour as it has against Canada. We cannot pick and choose, simply as it suits our convenience.

In essence, GATT is intended to provide a secure and predictable international trading environment in which industrial and commercial entities—public and private—have the confidence to invest, to create jobs and to trade. We have done very well by GATT and we will continue to do well. The resort by governments to protectionism, on the other hand, has been shown to reduce business confidence, raise prices, slow investment and to damage economic growth and development prospects over-all.

To ignore GATT rulings would constitute a threat to Canadian jobs, as this would leave Canadian trade exposed to retaliation from Canada's trading partners. If we ignore the rules, we create a situation in which others can also ignore them. A less disciplined trading climate would undermine the progress which we had made since 1948 through the GATT.

I have said that this motion is even less appropriate today than it was when it was first written over a year and a half ago. We have already responded to the GATT panel report in a manner which respects the GATT system but also ensures that the conservation and management of our valuable salmon and herring stocks is preserved. This involved implementation of a landing requirement, which was referred to a panel within the framework of the free trade agreement.

There were adjustments which were made. This year there have been a net increase in the number of workers employed in the fishery on the Pacific coast. That has been very good. People are very much aware that what the opposition is proposing is non-workable and does not make any sense.

I would like to conclude my remarks by suggesting that this motion is inappropriate and it should not be adopted in the House of Commons.