

B.C. sugar will be dramatically affected by this particular action. Can Senator Olson tell me whether he and his colleagues on that side of the house are prepared to make certain that the Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Agriculture take up these causes with the Mickey Kantors of this world to make certain that we receive a fair deal? The honourable senator is in a position to greatly influence the ministers.

**Senator Olson:** Honourable senators, I was not speaking for the government. We have a Leader of the Government in the Senate who can find the answers to the honourable senator's question. I am not sure how she would want to answer that kind of question.

The honourable senator can be sure of one thing: This government will do all things reasonable to protect Canadian interests. That has been, and still is, the practice of the Liberal Party. I would bet that they will do something. Nor do I know how much they will brag about it, as the honourable senator has just done with regard to the good agreement that has brought on all this trouble.

In any event, I am sure that what the honourable senator has said was an off-the-cuff remark. The Minister of International Trade, Roy MacLaren, and the Minister of Agriculture, Mr. Goodale, were in Washington when we had a dispute last July regarding shipping high quantities of wheat. I was there as well.

The honourable senator may rest assured that something will be done, although I am not in a position to give a commitment for or on behalf of the government.

**Hon. Joyce Fairbairn (Leader of the Government):** Honourable senators, I can. I am sorry I missed Senator Spivak's speech. I can assure you, particularly with regard to the issue of sugar, that the Canadian government, through the Minister of International Trade in particular, has had, and will continue to have, repeated contact with his American counterparts on that question. Indeed, I spoke to both ministers this morning to urge them on to greater heights.

**Hon. Leonard J. Gustafson:** Honourable senators, I speak as a farmer. The honourable senator said that there has been no gains. I am more optimistic. We must recognize the reality of a global economy. I am not suggesting that there will not be any problems with the new arrangement encompassed by this bill. Basically, this measure will reduce subsidies around the world. Granted, the process will take some time. If I can speak for farmers at all, and I have spent my life doing so, I say that we can compete with anyone in the world if we are on a level playing field. I believe that this bill, in its entirety, accomplishes that.

I was close to the Right Honourable Prime Minister Mulroney when he forged ahead with this bill. I am as pleased as I can be to hear that the Liberals have finally come around to the fact that we must live in the real world and recognize that there is a global economy out there that will pay big benefits to Canadian producers.

Agriculture today is responsible for over 40 per cent of the balance of payments in this country. It is an important part of our

economy. This bill will be good, not only for farmers, but for all of Canada.

**Senator Olson:** I do not think you understood the question.

**Hon. Jack Austin:** Honourable senators —

**The Hon. the Speaker:** Honourable senators, I wish to inform the Senate that if the Honourable Senator Austin speaks now, his speech will have the effect of closing the debate on the motion for second reading on this bill.

**Senator Austin:** Honourable senators, I am sure my remarks will be a relief to many in this chamber.

First, I should like to say that I appreciate the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition on many of the items that he has raised.

With respect to the question of free trade, I have always believed that the party to which I belong has historically espoused free trade and continues to do so. I am delighted that the Conservative Party has come to free trade in the past decade.

However, in explanation of the Conservative Party policy, I want to say that, in earlier times in Canadian history, the grand old national policy probably served well the development of Canada in general, although it did not serve the development of Western Canada as well as it might have.

However, the point is that all sides of this house concur in multilateral processes to develop greater access to trade. We all know that Canada is trade vulnerable. Both the previous government and this government are on a common path in terms of this legislation.

With respect to the free trade debate of 1988, there were obvious differences in the quality of the "free trade agreement." I was unhappy that the negotiators did not achieve the targets set by Prime Minister Mulroney when he announced the negotiations. However, that is in the past. We concur today, and I am glad that we do.

With respect to the suggestion that the bill be sent to a number of committees, I appreciate that the Leader of the Opposition in the Senate is not pressing that suggestion. The best way to deal with the questions that need to be dealt with in committee is in the Foreign Affairs Committee, which is already seized in general of the topic of multilateral free trade, has developed an expertise, and can move quickly to deal with more specific questions.

With respect to Senator Spivak's comments, I am glad that my leader has responded. I acknowledge that this is not a "made in heaven" agreement; this is a tough bargain. It has taken years and years to cut. As Senator Olson said, on balance, it is in the Canadian interest.

I acknowledged the role of the Honourable Michael Wilson when I spoke yesterday. I understand very well the contribution that he made. I was perhaps a little less fair to my own side in not acknowledging the role played by the Honourable Roy MacLaren and the officials under his responsibility, under the leadership of Peter Sutherland, who became the GATT leader and whose talents had a lot to do with the final act.