

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The House has heard the terms of the amendment. Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Madam Speaker, I intended to start out by saying that I had been thinking a lot about this speech, during the long, interminable set of speeches by both the Government and the Official Opposition. I say this seriously, too, because despite the duress of closure having been used by the Government, despite what we might call the dirty tricks of millions of dollars of advertising being spent to try to promote the trade deal, there is still a fundamental choice, a basic debate that faces Canada. I think that it is very much, when we get right down to it, a question of direction and philosophy. On one hand we have belief in basically unrestricted capitalism, a society which is driven by profit, by the fast buck, where those who own our large corporations basically call the shots, and where that is justified by the fact that they are believed to drive the economy forward.

The United States has always been the greatest example in the world of that kind of society of unrestricted capitalism in which the search for profit has driven what has taken place. It is for people who believe this view of the world. It is not a minus in any sense to integrate into the United States. On the contrary, it is a giant plus, because they see themselves as tying into an economy which is itself the model of that unrestricted capitalism.

On the other hand, there is a belief in people before profit, a belief in community, where we can take care of each other, where we share power instead of seeing that power concentrated in large corporations, in large organizations, and in large government. It is not so much a view that unrestricted capitalism does not work, though I think it is pretty clear, looking at the last 100 years, that unrestricted capitalism does not work successfully. Governments have to intervene. They have to smooth out business cycles. They have to provide infrastructure for the large corporate sector to make the money which drives it forward.

● (1830)

As I said, it is not so much a view that this unrestricted capitalism does not work; it is a much more positive view. It is a view that sees human beings fulfilled as people by much, much more than money, by much, much more than profit. It sees them fulfilled in a fair, caring and sharing society. That is the different perspective from which we in our Party approach this trade deal.

The fact is that this deal stops us from being able to build in the future that kind of fair, caring and sharing society for average families for which we as a Party have always fought. That is why we fight so strongly and will continue to do so as long as we possibly can. That is what it is all about.

When we cut through the rhetoric, the false statistics that are thrown out by the Minister for International Trade (Mr.

Crosbie), the nonsense which the Minister spoke in much of his speech, that is what it is all about. It is a question of direction: Do we choose the direction of unrestricted capitalism, U.S. style, or do we choose the chance to build a caring, fair society for average families in which they will have power to shape their lives? That is what it is all about.

This deal is in fact the biggest hoax Canadians have experienced in hundreds of years. The Government says that this is a trade deal. If we look through it, we find that there are chapters and chapters which deal with anything but trade. They deal with investment, agriculture, financial services, services themselves, emergency actions, technical standards, wine and distilled spirits. These are issues which are important to the people within those sectors. They are important to us as we try to shape monetary policy for our country. They are far, far more than a trade deal. Yet that is what we find throughout this deal, far, far more than a trade deal.

In fact, in this deal we find an integration with the United States which, over the next 20 years, will tie us so completely into United States society and United States assumptions that we will not have the ability to shape ourselves a Canadian direction for the future. That is what it is all about.

The Government says that it has been successful in signing this deal. When we actually get out on the hustings and face an election, this deal will be seen by the people of Canada not as a successful deal but as the largest failure of this Government, the failure that does not exempt us from the omnibus trade Bill in the United States with its various taxes on the capacity of Canadian exporters to export into the United States.

The committee on which I was a member said that we should not sign this deal if the omnibus trade Bill goes through. Last week, the omnibus trade Bill was signed by the President of the United States. It is now law. Yet this Government has not been prepared to withdraw this Bill as the committee suggested.

The Government did not get the exemption which it said was crucial, the exemption from countervail laws. We were told again and again by business people that they had to have that exemption in order to make certain that they had guaranteed access to the United States market. Well, they did not get it. There was no exemption from countervail or from anti-dumping. There was a complete failure on that level.

There was also a failure with respect to subsidies. The Government said that there had to be an agreement on subsidies. Looking through this Bill carefully, we do not find an exemption from subsidies, a code which gathers together an agreement with respect to subsidies. The Government failed at that and it concedes its failure.

Mr. McDermid: No, we didn't because—

Mr. Langdon: You did. That is what the Government said it sought, and it failed to get it.