

Motions

Some people in this House are on one side of that choice and other people are on the other. Some people in Canada wish that they had been born Americans and want to see this trade deal go forward in order to see that come into effect. Other people are proud of the fact that they are Canadians and want to see to it that Canada is preserved independent in the future.

Regardless of where we stand on this profound choice, regardless of which direction we would like to see our country take, we have a democratic responsibility as a House of Commons to see to it that across Canada, the small people, in their cities and in their towns, get the chance to speak out as powerfully and as passionately as they possibly can.

● (1600)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Questions or comments?

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, I thought we were rising on debate but if there is a question or comment period, I would just ask the Hon. Member one simple question. Has the House pronounced itself with respect to support for the agreement? What does a vote at second reading represent?

What the Member seems to be saying is that we should revisit the issue of whether free trade is a good idea for Canada or not. The Hon. Member knows that the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade travelled across the country. He knows that many millions of dollars were spent by a commission on the economy which studied this country for three years and recommended to the Canadian people and this chamber that we seek a free trade agreement with the U.S.

You may notice that the Hon. Member talked very little about the legislative process, about the need to hear witnesses. That is peculiar. People who are listening may want to examine the "blues" to see whether or not he talked about the need to travel the country for the purpose of examining the fine print of the legislation and having technical experts tell us whether the words in the legislation reflect the agreement. He forgot, or maybe he does not know, that most of those people with that kind of expertise live here in Ottawa. That is where most of the witnesses with respect to fine print and the law come from at the legislative stage of most Bills.

Is he talking about trying to take the House backwards in time to some day when the House was not committed to this agreement? Or, is he simply seeking to filibuster the House, frustrate the House, frustrate the democratic process, by suggesting that the issue is not resolved?

This House has spoken and spoken clearly. This House wants this free trade agreement, and the job of the committee is to examine the fine print and make sure it is this agreement in the fine print. That is its job. Travelling the country is not its job.

Mr. Langdon: Madam Speaker, frankly, I can hardly believe what I just heard from the Parliamentary Secretary. First,

unlike the Parliamentary Secretary, I was a member of that committee which crossed the country very rapidly. It heard a fair number of people speak with respect not to the trade deal itself but to a short, preliminary document which bore very little relationship to the details in the trade deal itself.

With respect to the Macdonald Commission, one of the major features of this trade deal is that it includes services for the first time in any significant trade deal in the world. Let you think that services are a small part of our economy, they make up 72 per cent of the economic activity in Canada. The Macdonald Commission did not do any study whatsoever of the impact of a free trade arrangement with respect to services because it did not expect services would ever be part of a deal. Therefore, to refer to that document is also false.

With respect to the final comment of the Parliamentary Secretary, to say that all the expertise that needs to be consulted with respect to this Bill in Ottawa is perhaps the most amazing statement which I have ever heard in this House.

Mr. Hawkes: Why don't you repeat the quote accurately instead of lying once again? You say "all". I never said "all". I said "most".

Mr. Langdon: I think there is cause for withdrawal on the part of the Hon. Member.

Mr. Hawkes: A little honesty in this debate would go a long way.

Mr. Langdon: He has accused me—

Mr. Riis: Point of order, Madam Speaker. I do not know if it was audible to you but it seemed to be audible to the rest of the House, and I suspect even to the gallery, when the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary called the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon) a liar. He said that he was lying. He called him a liar. As a respected and longstanding member of this House he ought to do the honourable thing and stand in his place and withdraw that unparliamentary remark.

Mr. Hawkes: Madam Speaker, I never hesitate, if I have offended the rules of the House, to withdraw any remark. What I am asking the Hon. Member to do is, if he is going to quote me, to quote me accurately and not present a distortion to the House and the nation about what I said. I never said, and the record will bear me out, that all the expertise is in Ottawa. I said most of the legal expertise around the fine print in legislation is to be found in Ottawa, and that is a fact.

Mr. Riis: Perhaps the Hon. Member did not understand the point I was making. He hurled the ultimate insult by saying my hon. colleague from Essex—Windsor was lying. I do not know how you would interpret that. I know the "blues" will certainly reflect that. It was audible here and I suspect audible to people in the gallery. It is what we have come to expect from the Hon. Member but it is strictly unparliamentary.