

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

If the Hon. Member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Axworthy), for example, were taken seriously by the U.S. administration and by the congressional leadership as being representative of a significant body of Canadian thinking, whose view might prevail, would we not think that there might be some kind of a shrinking back and horror on the part of the U.S. administration?

In fact, there are those who have asked, when they have pointed their cigars at the Hon. Member for Winnipeg South Centre, if there is anything on God's green earth that that man is for. My hon. friend, I know, is for Canada, as I think I am, and I would like to ask her whether she sincerely believes that our Canadian sense, that sense that I know she has of being proudly Canadian, has in any way been eroded or impaired over the past shall we say 35 years during which our trade and our close relationship with the United States, largely under the regime of her Party, have grown closer and closer. Is it not true that many of the Canadian cultural and other institutions which we hold so dear have flourished and grown during that period? Is there not truly in this agreement nothing to impair that—

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I recognize the Hon. Member for Mount Royal.

Mrs. Finestone: Mr. Speaker, I would be pleased to try to answer in a more global sense the questions of my colleague and friend from Edmonton Southwest. At the outset, though, I would like to suggest to him that the remarks of my colleague from Winnipeg South Centre were genuine. He has a son and he is anxious to pass on to his son the same kind of love of country that the Hon. Member has instilled in his children and I have and have instilled in mine.

Over the last 35 years, there has been incredible growth and development in Canada. I said we are a young country. Through the Canada Council and our broadcast policies, we have fortunately put lots of money into trying to promote our artists and their ability to find a medium of expression, whether in the visual or the performing arts.

The Broadcasting Act allows for a great deal of Canadianization, and my concern is that that forms opinions and thoughts. If our children and grandchildren are constantly exposed to American programming, they will not necessarily turn out to be bad people, but they will not turn out to be people with a concept of a Canadian reality.

I am concerned that the capital cost allowance, which was a way to incite the private sector into investing in

film distribution and production, was cut out because of pressure from Jack Valenti. The watering down of our film distribution Bill embarrassed the former Minister of Communications whose arm was twisted, as did the Baie Comeau policy and the concept of buying back our own products and distribution potential for our products. All those are now compromised.

All I wanted was assurances. I would recommend that Hon. Members look at Article 1607.3, Article 1607.4, and Article 2011. I do not want to go into the nullification clauses or the divestiture clauses. The concepts were there. The philosophies were there.

• (1930)

The Minister of Energy (Mr. Masse) did a good job. They have all tried but nothing has happened. The Government is now in a position of losing all the effort and initiative that was started by Liberals and carried on by the Conservatives. Cultural protection is an ongoing commitment of which we do not have enough in this House. If we are to be concerned about who we are, the money, support, political policy and political will—not just throwing money but having a vision of where we want to go—must be integrated into the political philosophy and the legislative action of this country. That means a film and a book distribution policy, all the policies that concern marketing, distribution, and exhibition for ourselves first. For the stranger at the gate, 97 per cent of our market they have in filming and 80 per cent they have in film distribution. I do not have to give the Hon. Member the figures. He knows them. Yes, I have serious concerns.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Speaker, I know the time is brief. Let me just pick up the theme of the Member who has been addressing us. It seems to me that the whole thrust of the free trade initiative taken by the Government is to further commercialize Canadian life. When one discusses and addresses the cultural themes as has the Member, one has to look at the global picture in that sense as well.

What we have, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) said during the television debate, is just a commercial agreement. He honoured tonight all the virtues, in particular that of competitiveness. It strikes me that we hope to have a society in Canada that has somewhat different values. One of them that we ought to be cherishing and giving a higher place to is that of a broadly based cultural policy in which all Canadians can share. The only way we can have that is to have a strong