

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

The people of Canada will recognize what the Opposition is trying to do to this good treaty that has been negotiated between our two countries.

Mr. Ernie Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I join in the debate this morning on motions put forward by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon), with pleasure. Before the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—St. James (Mr. Minaker) leaves the Chamber, perhaps I should take a moment to deal with one or two of the things that—

Mr. Minaker: I am not leaving the Chamber. I am going across the way to talk to someone.

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): He is going to the other side to listen. I am pleased to see that.

I would like to make a couple of points. First, the C. D. Howe Institute is always of some interest for me as a Member for the constituency represented once upon a time by the Hon. C. D. Howe, the old riding of Port Arthur, now Thunder Bay—Nipigon. The C. D. Howe Institute began life as the Private Planning Association of Canada Operations, an affiliate of an American organization in Canada. It was latterly turned into the C. D. Howe Institute. It has always had that American connection. As my colleague was trying to point out a few minutes ago, it has been abundantly funded by the large corporate interests of Canada which have their own interests to support. They find the C. D. Howe Institute perfectly useful in supporting those interests.

Mr. McDermid: Just like the CLC does with the NDP Party.

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Perhaps in regard to that I should read from a copy of an advertisement which I have in my hand published by Georgia, "The International State". It is entitled: "138 Reasons To Do Business In Georgia." I take it from the content of the ad that there are 138 companies operating in Georgia, with no less than \$950 million U.S. of Canadian investment in that state. Why are so many Canadian corporations operating in Georgia? For a number of reasons. It points out the productivity growth of the labour force is 36 per cent higher than the U.S. average. It focuses on the fact that the costs of labour in Georgia are among the lowest in the U.S. It observes that fewer than two in ten workers belong to a labour union.

The Parliamentary Secretary just moments ago was evincing his own anti-union, anti-labour attitudes in the House by his jibes across the floor.

Mr. McDermid: I used to be a union member.

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): I am not surprised that he would be a proponent of this trade deal which will encourage more investment in the U.S., investment in states such as Georgia where everything that the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—St. James has been trying to assert about good incomes

resulting from economic investment would seem not to be particularly true.

I note among the 138 reasons for Canadians to look to Georgia, the international state to invest, the firm Dominion Textile is mentioned. Anyone who has been observing Dominion Textile—this great corporation put together in 1905 by a union of other companies to try to achieve a dominant position in certain lines of the Canadian textile industry—will see that it has been moving out of Canada at a pretty tidy rate over the last while. It has been putting its investment into the U.S., and hiring labour in America states where it can produce much more cheaply, and reducing the employment in Canada in a process which one of these days could very well see Domtex producing nothing in the province of Québec.

● (1240)

Mr. McDermid: Why have they not all moved down there if it is so good?

Mr. Blackburn (Brant): They will after free trade.

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): I wonder about support of the trade deal by members of the Conservative caucus from the Province of Québec, and those who represent textile workers employed by Domtex in Québec City, in Montreal, and in other cities in Québec. This trade deal will encourage Dominion Textile, a great enterprise built up behind tariff barriers in Canada, to do its producing in the United States and importing into Canada to meet the demand here. That is Canadian prosperity under the trade deal.

The focus in these motions is on some particular matters of accountability to Parliament on the part of the Government when it appoints persons to boards and when it establishes regulations. In the last months in certain parliamentary committees, and in the legislative committee on Bill C-72, in dealing with the Official Languages Bill, we saw some interesting developments. I witnessed this development in the regulatory functions of the federal Government in ways that seemed to me to coincide exactly with what my friend, the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor is putting forward in these motions.

In the Official Languages Bill there is a measure that is essential to national unity. Here we have an elaboration of official languages provisions dating back to 1969. In those provisions there was an elaboration which was repugnant to some members of the Conservative caucus, one or two of them being present in the House at the moment. Those persons resisted those provisions. It was a drawn out process that was fought by Conservative back-benchers against Bill C-72 which was just about worthy of comparison with the valiant struggle which my colleague has been fighting in the legislative committee, in the House, and on the hustings against this trade deal. Conservatives put up quite a fight. In watching the response of the Government, what was interesting was the manner in which it finally came forth with some proposals on regulation.