

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement***GOVERNMENT ORDERS***[English]***CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT****MEASURE TO ENACT**

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Crosbie that Bill C-2, an Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States of America, be read the third time and passed; and the amendment of Mr. Axworthy (p. 640).

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (International Trade) and Minister of State (Housing): Mr. Speaker, in the few minutes I have left to me there are two or three points that I would like to cover. I think the first point that should be made for those people who are watching this debate is that we are on an amendment that was introduced by the Hon. Member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. Axworthy). The Liberals have come back to the House to debate the Bill but have obstructed all along the way. They have called for votes for leave to introduce a Bill and first reading. It became very clear that we had to take action to ensure this legislation passed the House in a reasonable amount of time with reasonable study. That was accomplished. We are now into third reading. This amendment is another stall tactic by the Liberals. We will be defeating the amendment by voting against it. That is point one.

● (1240)

The second point is the campaign waged by the United Church against the Free Trade Agreement. The United Church of Canada, of which my father was a minister for a number of years, put little inserts in church bulletins during the campaign opposing the Free Trade Agreement. We have heard objections to corporations advertising in support of free trade, but unions such as the CLC and the CAW advertised. Mel Hurtig and Maud Barlow advertised. Did that not count?

From the proceedings of our committee on Bill C-130, let me read the position of the United Church. It reads as follows:

The United Church of Canada has found that the agreement limits our democratic ability to use our capital and resources for worthy national purposes and has declared that the agreement is not, on balance, in the overall interest of the people of Canada. It has called upon the Government of Canada to suspend further steps toward the implementation of the agreement until such time as the people of Canada may be democratically consulted.

Well, they have now been democratically consulted. I have not heard a word from the United Church supporting this move.

I went to church last Sunday, and I brought the bulletin from our church along with me today. It is interesting that the United Church is attacking the Free Trade Agreement, saying how terrible and bad it will be for Canada. The United Church's standard Christmas bulletin, "Rejoice, the Lord is Coming", was printed in the United States of America. This is the hypocrisy that has plagued this debate.

Ms. Copps: What have you got against the United Church?

Mr. McDermid: When I saw this on Sunday, I could not believe it. I am calling on the United Church of Canada to come out and support the agreement and make it work. That is all we are asking for. We will pass it tonight. We will go into the Senate next week to get Royal Assent so that entrepreneurs and creative people in this country can get on with their lives and create a better and more prosperous Canada.

I wish to thank some people for the work they have done over the last three years. The three Ministers involved, the Hon. James Kelleher, the Hon. Pat Carney, and the present Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie), have spent considerable time on this agreement and have done a fantastic job. They also allowed me to participate actively, for which I am thankful.

I want to thank Ambassador Reisman, Ambassador Ritchie and the staff of the trade negotiation office who spent countless hours working on the agreement, negotiating and consulting with the sectoral advisory committees, the International Trade Advisory Committee. I want to thank myriad other people. Our bureaucrats are often criticized for being lazy and not going that extra mile. These people worked many nights and weekends. They travelled extensively to the United States during these negotiations. They are to be commended. I learned a tremendous amount from Ambassador Reisman, Ambassador Ritchie, and those in the trade negotiation office who offered such good advice.

Finally, I want to thank the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). I want to look back at four decisions leading to free trade, four crucial decisions taken by the Prime Minister, four decisions in which he showed courage and leadership.