

*Customs Tariff*

book or periodical. I do not include the Minister of the Environment, who I feel is a learned gentleman and, indeed, an honourable one. He knows a lot about acid rain and I think he reads a lot of books about acid rain. We just hope his next step is to stop reading and start doing something about it. That is the next step. We are all behind him to encourage him along the way.

• (1550)

So, when we deal with Bill C-87, which is quite a technical piece of legislation, we support the Automotive Industries Association of Canada in its request that the Government delay for three months the implementation of this Bill. In this way the industry can begin to comprehend and digest more fully what all the changes would mean to that particular industry and other industries. We urge the Government to be open to the suggestions from the industry to clean up the Bill so that it will not have the effect of driving some industries down to the United States and therefore lose Canadian jobs.

In debating Bill C-87 we must also talk about the larger question that is looming over this country, that is, the proposed trade agreement between the Prime Minister and President Reagan. We must surely ask the question whether this is something that will be of benefit to Canadians.

I see you have given me the two fingers, Mr. Speaker, and by that I understand that I have two minutes remaining. I see the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) has his whole hand in his mouth. That does not mean anything.

I wish to point out in closing my remarks that the Government proclaimed the great benefits of the slogan "Open for business", which its counterpart in Saskatchewan, Premier Devine, campaigned on so eloquently in 1982. The slogan in Saskatchewan now is not "Open for business" but "Hoping for business". We must point out that it is the foreign investors and foreign-owned companies in this country that have the worst record in terms of job creation.

According to a Stats Canada study, between 1978 and 1985 Canadian-controlled companies created some 876,000 new jobs while foreign companies eliminated 12,800 jobs. Meanwhile, the share of profits earned by foreign firms in Canada rose from 31 per cent to 43 per cent of total profits. These few statistics eloquently point out the effects of having an economy that is so greatly controlled by people foreign to us. Their interests are not the interests of creating jobs and real economic activity in Canada. Statistics show that they received almost 50 per cent of the profits made in this country, yet between 1978 and 1985, in a seven-year period, they actually eliminated over 12,000 jobs.

I hope that these statistics will give the Government some pause as it makes this headlong dash into the embrace of the American eagle. I hope that government Members will begin to recognize that it is not in the interests of Canada, which they have sworn to uphold, to continue with this madness of a trade deal with the United States.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Are there questions or comments? The Hon. Member for Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands.

**Mr. Manly:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for Regina East (Mr. de Jong) for a very helpful speech on the whole question of tariffs and pointing out how it relates to the whole question of the Prime Minister's (Mr. Mulroney) trade deal with the United States. The thing that I would like to ask him about is this. The Prime Minister is very clearly on the record as having stated his opposition to free trade before he became the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party. Other leading members of the Conservative Party, including the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark), who is in the House today, also indicated their opposition to the folly of some kind of total agreement with the United States on trade. That was their position before the 1984 election. There was no commitment to negotiate an agreement with the United States during the 1984 election.

Since that election we have seen nothing but one concession after another to the United States. We have seen the abolition of FIRA by which we gutted our capacity to look into American takeovers of Canadian firms. We have seen the struggle to ram through Bill C-22 which will result in higher drug costs for Canada. We have seen the bungling and the supine attitude toward the softwood lumber issue. We have seen a whole range of issues on which the Government has buckled under pressure from the United States.

The question I would like to ask the Hon. Member is this. Why does the Hon. Member think that the Prime Minister changed his position on the question of free trade when he was so clearly opposed to it before he became the Leader of the Progressive Conservative Party? He made no attempt to seek a mandate for it in the 1984 election campaign. Why would he have changed his position and now be entering into this agreement with the United States which is so clearly fraught with danger to the Canadian future?

**Mr. de Jong:** I thank my colleague and friend, Mr. Speaker, for asking a very important question. I am not certain if I can give a complete answer to it. He is certainly correct in pointing out that the Prime Minister, including the front-bench Members of the Government, were all against the concept of free trade. Since coming to power they seem to have turned themselves around 180 degrees. What motivated them to do that I am not certain.

Certainly, one could say that before the Prime Minister became Prime Minister he was a branch plant manager. Perhaps he feels comfortable in that role. Certainly, under a free trade agreement he will again become more of a branch plant manager, except that the branch plant will now be Canada. I find that to be the driving force of Members opposite. They feel that the future of the country is to be tied totally to the future and the well-being of our cousins and friends south of us.