

*Supply*

● (1730)

There were 28 official sessions, some of which lasted more than a week, as well as many sessions of detailed negotiations with task forces responsible for specific sectors and problems. That is what really happened, Mr. Speaker. And to demonstrate how desirable it was that these important talks should rise above the level of partisan debate, we invited, I repeat, we invited both Opposition Parties to come and sit down and discuss the issues with us, but they consistently refused. Mr. Speaker, how could we possibly have a debate that to Opposition Members would be an open and honest debate, a debate that would be good for Canadians, when they refused to participate in a process, when they refused to bring their queries to the negotiators, to raise points of particular concern, points that, to a certain extent, might jeopardize our economy and constitute some kind of danger for Canadians? Mr. Speaker, the Liberals and the New Democrats refused to take part in this process with us, as a normal part of the negotiations. We heard the Liberal Leader say: I will tear up the Agreement. That is really smart. That is typical of the rough reasoning of the Liberal Party. He does not want to negotiate, and he is ready to tear up the Agreement.

We saw the Leader of the New Democratic Party say: It is unacceptable. He even wanted to tell the Premier of Quebec what to do about electric power sales. He wanted to tell him what to do. And he calls that democracy. This morning, I heard the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) say the Canadian Government was not democratic because it wanted to conclude this Free Trade Agreement. Mr. Speaker, what is democracy? When six provinces are in favour of free trade, including Quebec, and when the two Opposition Leaders, the two Opposition Parties keep saying the Agreement is no good— Mr. Speaker, I do not think democracy is a one-way street. And when the Canadian public—48 per cent, according to one poll, is satisfied with the Agreement; Mr. Speaker, 62 per cent of Canadians think that the Free Trade Agreement would be a good thing for their province! Of course it does not work out 100 per cent, there is nothing absolute. Still, Mr. Speaker, it is a show of democracy on the part of a Government that promised to create permanent jobs, promised to get involved, promised to do something other than voice pious wishes. There are risks involved, Mr. Speaker, huge risks as we saw last March 16 when a motion was introduced in the House because indeed perhaps there were problems related to the free trade deal or the free trade negotiations. At the time, Mr. Speaker, the House considered a motion which can be summed up in these words: That Canada and the Canadian Government support bilateral negotiations with the Americans. However, we will protect our social programs, our cultural identity, our farm products marketing boards, and the Auto Pact.

But here is the strangest thing: The motion was moved by our Minister for International Trade (Miss Carney) and was tabled, then the vote began. Of course the Party in office rose to vote because it was altogether logical and reasonable to

protect what the various advisory groups had asked us to protect. Well, both Opposition Parties refused to vote on that. They voted against. They voted against preserving our cultural identity. They voted against maintaining social programs. They voted against keeping our farm products marketing boards. They voted against keeping the Auto Pact. And since then, Mr. Speaker, we have seen them repeating around the country: It is dangerous for the auto pact, for farmers, for our social programs, for our cultural identity. But where is the logic in all that, Mr. Speaker? Where is the logic of a Party that refuses to support a Government motion saying those areas are protected, but while it claims on the other hand the agreement offers no such protection? Mr. Speaker, the Government has a much more consistent and logical approach on a bilateral agreement than the two Opposition Parties, and I can tell Canadians the motion of March 16 is directly reflected in the agreement documents. It is reflected in the agreement because that was the wish of the Canadian people.

All day long the New Democrats and the Liberals have been saying the free trade agreement is jeopardizing social programs. This is quite untrue, Mr. Speaker. The best proof would be to look at a European country such as Sweden. If there is one country which is proud of its social programs, where the individual is protected and assisted by the state, it is certainly Sweden. I am sure that all the Hon. Members will agree.

If we look closely at the trading activities of Sweden, we find that Sweden is a founding member of the European Free Trade Association. It still is a member of this association, which has signed a free trade agreement with the European Economic Community. The Swedish manufacturers of Volvos therefore have a guaranteed access to about 355 million consumers. The strategy of Sweden is not based on a closed economy or on fear of competition, but on openness and on the belief that its manufacturers can compete on any European or world market. Yet, Sweden had some of the best social programs in the world. It is also an ardent defender of free trade agreements. The parties opposite should look at what could happen. They should look at what is going on in other countries. Perhaps then, they would better understand that an economic agreement in no way threatens such basic values as our social programs.

The Liberal and NDP Members suggest that we shall lose our cultural identity with free trade. They are trying to make Quebecers and French Canadians believe that we shall lose our cultural identity. Mr. Speaker, there are approximately six million French-speaking Canadians. Did we lose our cultural identity because we live among 250 or 300 million Americans and Canadians? No, Mr. Speaker. We have developed and strengthened our identity. We have not been assimilated, and contrary to what the Opposition may say, we shall not become assimilated under a free trade agreement. We have defended our institutions. We have improved them and they are among the best in the French-speaking world. Take our educational system. Take companies like Bombardier. Did Bombardier,