

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

The Government does nothing and plans simply an extended vacation—and we all need a break. However, I want to put my remarks in the context of this Bill.

What is taking place in our country right now, while the Government is planning to get this measure through Parliament as quickly as it can, is that Canadian men and women in many parts of our land, in the hundreds—indeed in the thousands—are experiencing lay-offs. I wish to digress for a minute. I am quite prepared to accept what was alluded to in the House of Commons the other day. Yes, there are some new investments coming into the country, in some parts. Yes, some of them might be attributed to the trade deal. But I am speaking right now of the other side of the equation as we sit here debating this measure. There are men and women who have been told that their jobs will not be in existence within a matter of weeks. A Parliament that is now debating trade legislation ought simultaneously to be undertaking measures to ensure that those workers, their families, and their communities which will be affected are going to be responsibly responded to by the Parliament of Canada. We should be doing that.

● (1800)

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, ever since the free trade negotiations got under way the New Democrats have argued that pressures to harmonize as well as the very details of the agreement would lead to Canadian plant shutdowns and that the multinationals would transfer jobs south of the border. This is what the Prime Minister himself said in 1983: "What will happen with this kind of concept is that companies throughout the United States will increase production and close their operations in Canada."

Since the elections, our predictions, and those of the Prime Minister, are coming true. Let us look over the list of shutdowns since November 21. Gillette Canada was established in this country in 1906. On November 23, the president of Gillette Canada announced the closing of its plants in Montreal and in Toronto. The result being that 590 men and women lost their jobs.

Pittsburgh Paint announced they would close the plant they had been operating since World War II, and this took place although the plant was a profitable operation. In the future the company will supply the Canadian market through its American plants. Management claim they are closing their Canadian plant because it is not big enough to install the new equipment needed to make new products. Well, we believe the real

reason behind their decision to leave is that they did not want to follow Canada's environment protection standards, which happen to be stricter than those of the Americans.

As we said on a number of occasions during the campaign, the trade agreement is the source of this kind of confrontation between jobs and environmental considerations. There is ample evidence to show that our ability to impose our environmental protection standards is compromised by the trade agreement. And who are the victims of such compromises? Certainly not the big companies! The victims are workers, men and women alike, and Canadians who want a healthy environment. Perhaps the Conservatives are prepared to accept that, but certainly we New Democrats are not.

*[English]*

The list of lay-offs continues. Ortho Diagnostic Systems, a subsidiary of Johnson and Johnson, announced a transfer of its laboratory test production to New Jersey. Those were not unskilled but sophisticated, important jobs that we thought were durable and long-range jobs. They are moving out.

Allergan, a pharmaceutical company that is a subsidiary of Allergan California, announced on December 2 that it would close its plant in Pointe Claire on January 1. Last week Northern Telecom shut down plants in Aylmer, Quebec and Belleville, Ontario, throwing 870 workers on to the unemployment lines.

I say bluntly that I was astounded at the Government's reaction to this shut-down. This is a Canadian company whose plants that were shut down are profitable. One has received millions of dollars in assistance in different forms from the taxpayers of Canada through the federal Government. It is a company that has a quasi-monopoly in terms of access to the markets in Canada. The Government of Canada, instead of responding in a determined and tough-minded way on behalf of the workers, stood idly by. A Government that cares would not have done that. A Government that cares would have intervened directly to ensure those jobs are kept here in Canada.

Also this past week the President of the United States, in what I frankly regard as a hypocritical act, kept in place an unfair tariff on shakes and shingles. This tariff, when it was imposed long before the recent election, was condemned by the Prime Minister himself, who correctly pointed out that this was totally inconsistent with everything that Ronald Reagan had said as