

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

agreement between Canada and the United States of America, as reported (with amendments) from a legislative committee; and the amendments of Mr. Axworthy:

Motion No. 9

That Bill C-130 be amended by adding immediately after line 43 at page 3 the following:

"7. For greater certainty, nothing in this Act shall be interpreted so as to apply to lands, resources, and waters claims by aboriginal peoples under an aboriginal claim."

Motion No. 10

That Bill C-130 be amended by adding immediately after line 43 at page 3 the following:

"7. For greater certainty, nothing in this Act shall affect programs to protect the environment or conservation of land, resources and waters."

Motion No. 11

That Bill C-130 be amended by adding immediately after line 43 at page 3 the following:

"7. For greater certainty, nothing in this Act shall be interpreted so as to affect or preclude the continuation of existing or the establishment of new special adjustment programs to help firms or workers adjust to the changes brought about by the implementation of the Agreement."

Motion No. 12

That Bill C-130 be amended by adding immediately after lines 43 at page 3 the following:

"7. For greater certainty, nothing in this Act shall be interpreted so as to affect or preclude the continuation of existing or the establishment of new regional development programs."

Motion No. 13

That Bill C-130 be amended by adding immediately after line 43 at page 3 the following:

"7. For greater certainty, nothing in this Act shall be interpreted so as to affect the continuation of existing or the establishment of new Canadian social programs, including medicare, unemployment insurance, daycare, pensions, minimum wage laws, labour laws and maternity benefits."

Motion No. 14

That Bill C-130 be amended by adding immediately after line 43 at page 3 the following:

"7. For greater certainty, nothing in this Act shall be interpreted so as to affect or preclude the continuation of existing or the establishment of new cultural programs by future Canadian governments."

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with a group of motions which in effect challenge the Conservative Government to put its money where its mouth is. Specifically, the Government continues to claim that its trade agreement will not affect vital Canadian characteristics, policies, and programs. However, this set of motions would enable this House to exempt specifically from the Bill aboriginal people's land and resource claims, the environment and environmental protection policy and programs, programs and policies to assist workers and firms in adjusting to the agreement, regional economic development policy, social policy, and cultural industries and programs.

There is no specific mention of environmental protection or environmental issues in the trade deal as such. However, this does not mean that it is entirely clear that there are no valid grounds for concern that the Government's trade deal with the

United States will impair existing environmental protection programs, both federal and provincial, or hamper our ability to put new or improved ones in place in future. No environmental impact study of this agreement has been carried out by the Conservative Government before, during, or after the deal was signed.

Canada may well also face pressures to lower Canadian environmental standards to American levels. Canadian business could argue that more stringent Canadian environmental regulations on such things as acid rain emissions, air pollution, liquid waste disposal, and the use of pesticides could place Canadian companies at a competitive disadvantage *vis-à-vis* their American competitors. Canada may also lose the ability in pricing energy exports to recover financial compensation for environmental damage caused by energy exporters. Furthermore, subsidies given by Canadian federal and provincial Governments to reduce pollution emissions could be attacked by American companies as an unfair subsidy.

The definition of "unfair subsidies" is still to be negotiated by Canada and the United States over the next five years to seven years. Pollution control subsidies and subsidies relating to the environment have not, I repeat, been explicitly excluded from these negotiations.

Environmental groups have sent letters to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) asking for assurances on this issue. They have not received a specific reply from the Prime Minister. They only received a reply from the Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) stating that the trade deal has nothing to do with the environment. I do not know how one can place any confidence in the words of the Minister for International Trade on what the trade deal has to do with the environment or anything else because he has stated quite categorically—he boasted—that he has not bothered to read the deal. He wants to treat the whole matter in the same way he treated the sale of vacuum cleaners when he was trying to do that years ago as a student, but Canada and its environment is more important than the way one treats the selling of vacuum cleaners.

The Canadian Wildlife Federation has quite clearly denounced the Government's trade deal as a threat to Canada's control over its environment. The executive vice-president of the federation stated that it was "not convinced that Simon Reisman's negotiating team had given any consideration whatsoever to possible environmental impacts of a free trade agreement".

It would be very simple if the Government were sincere in what it says about not wanting environmental programs, present and future, to be affected by this trade deal. All the Government would have to do to show its sincerity would be to agree to accept our amendment and clearly exempt environmental programs, present and future, from being affected in any way by this trade deal. However, if the Government is not willing to do that, and if we continue to have in the trade deal