

Supply

If I cannot answer the member's question I apologize. I have no great expertise, but please do not lose sight of the much bigger picture. I think the member is putting the blinders on and allowing that to happen.

Mr. Ken Atkinson (St. Catharines): Mr. Speaker, I listened to the last response with a great deal of interest because of the position I have in my community. We have a lot of automobile parts producers. They are most interested in the NAFTA and are in full support of what it does. As my friend from Cambridge pointed out, tariff barriers coming down on automobile parts going into Mexico will be a great benefit to my part of the country.

In addition, in the NAFTA North American content for automobiles is raised to 62.5 per cent. For someone from an area such as mine in which there are the big three auto producers, specifically General Motors, this is important. They have been asking for that increased content and now that is going to be done in the NAFTA.

• (1710)

The current FTA only provides for 50 per cent content. This is an advantage to our area and something that we look forward to. The labour unions were mentioned. This is something that they had lobbied for. They are now not saying anything about because it because they have this part of the renegotiation and they have this increased North American content that is going to help the automobile parts producers in my area. In that way, for my particular area, NAFTA will be a benefit.

I listened to my friend and his response to the question that was asked by the member for Cambridge and I say that it is something quite important to our part of the country which has been hard hit.

I would be interested in my friend's response as to whether we going to build the tariff barriers back up around our country. We know that nearly 30 per cent of our country's gross domestic product comes from selling products to other countries.

What are we going to do if we tear up the FTA and NAFTA? Are we going to build up tariff barriers around this country of 27 million people whose wealth and standard of living depends on trading with the rest of the

world. They are not going to say: "Oh, that is great. We are just going to be happy about that."

Another thing perhaps my friend could comment on is the fact that the auto pact is now part of the FTA. Ripping up the FTA could endanger the Auto Pact. Under the Auto Pact we are a net beneficiary. We consume 9 per cent of the cars in North America and we produce 17 per cent of the cars that are consumed in North America. The Auto Pact is very important to us and anything that would endanger that would cause us and this entire country a great deal of difficulty.

Mr. Butland: Mr. Speaker, I do not want to get into a debate with a member who represents his constituency. Who knows better than he about his constituency? I will accept some of his, I hope, very valid arguments. I am surprised. I want to check some of the statements he has made that suddenly all of the opposition in the area has gone silent. I find it hard to believe that they have now gone into the woodwork. I am not going to venture into a specific debate as I suspect he would not debate me on steel, but I do not know that for sure.

Sectoral agreements in trade are good and we are saying yes to the auto pact. The Canadian steel producers of this country are saying that sectoral trade agreements are what this should be all about. Probably, on balance, we know that there are going to be some net gainers and some net losers. We will proffer the appropriate sectors and the numbers of losers under free trade and NAFTA.

I wanted to ask this question again. Who does the member think will be buying these parts from Canadian producers? Will they be shipped from his area to Mexico to be purchased by the Mexicans? I somehow doubt it.

We talked about barriers. Are we going to build the barriers up again and become protectionist? Free trade is fine. I think anybody who argues against true free trade is misguided. However, what is the problem with striking a social contract among the three countries? Is there a problem with that? They have done it with some success in the European Common Market. However, in the North American trade agreements there is no mention of it. In fact, heaven forbid if one talks about environmental or labour standards. What is that? What a nebulous, airy-fairy obscure thought.