

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Mr. McDermid: Thank you, Madam Chairman. I want to assure the Hon. Member that my statement that I will not accept amendments in this debate has nothing whatsoever to do with arrogance; rather, it has to do with the fact that we have in place a Free Trade Agreement which was signed well over a year ago.

Bill C-2 implements the Free Trade Agreement. That is what the Bill is all about.

Madam Chairman, we went through 100 amendments put forward by the Opposition the last time we examined the Free Trade Agreement enabling legislation. Each one was gone into point by point in terms of why it was not necessary that it be included in the Bill.

The Opposition wants to state explicitly in the agreement everything that is not to be included in the agreement.

When a person disposes of a piece of property, the agreement sets out strictly what is involved in the transaction. One does not state in the agreement that the wife and children are included, or that the family automobile is included. The agreement simply sets out what is included in the transaction, and that is it, and it is precisely that way with the Free Trade Agreement and the legislation that we are talking about today.

An Hon. Member: That is nonsense.

Mr. McDermid: The amendments that they wish to bring in have absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with the Free Trade Agreement. The Hon. Member knows that.

Throughout last summer we went through the amendments proposed by the Opposition, and we went through them point by point. We, along with the Hon. Member for Winnipeg South Centre, worked on the Free Trade Agreement enabling legislation all of last summer, and we went point by point through all of the amendments put forward by the Opposition.

• (1240)

I want to touch for just a moment on his comments on agriculture. Never in the history of this country has the agricultural community been so well taken care of. When there were problems, whether it was drought or unfair pricing in world markets for some agricultural products, this Government was there to help the farmers. That is not going to change. The Hon. Member says we should not have discussed agriculture in a trade agreement. We ship \$5 billion worth of agricultural products to the U.S. You do not discuss that in a trade

agreement? What absolute nonsense. What absolute poppycock. It is one of our biggest trading units. Why would you not discuss it in a trade agreement? Why would you not make it better for our farmers to trade? That is exactly what we are doing.

We are also doing it in GATT, as the Minister reminds me. It was at Canada's insistence that agriculture was put on the agenda for the Uruguay round of negotiations. Sure they are having problems. By the way, we missed the Hon. Member in Montreal. He was invited and did not show up. We are sorry he did not make it.

Mr. Crosbie: Too busy, not interested in the GATT.

Mr. McDermid: That is too bad because he might have learned something down there.

Mr. Langdon: Point of order, Madam Chairman. The Minister just suggested I received an invitation to attend the GATT meetings in Montreal. That is simply incorrect. I did not receive any such personal invitation and I ask him to withdraw that comment.

Mr. McDermid: I am not sure if the Hon. Member was away on holidays after the election or what, but I can tell you that invitations were offered to both Party critics. His name was on the registration list.

Mr. Crosbie: It went through his chairman, but his chairman would not approve him.

Mr. McDermid: Oh, through his chairman? He had better check with his caucus on that.

Mr. Crosbie: Check with Bob White.

Mr. McDermid: It is too bad they did not notify him of what was going on.

Mr. Crosbie: Maybe Shirley Carr.

Mr. Langdon: Point of order.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: As president of this committee I think we are getting away from our chartered course. We should be discussing the Bill. I will hear the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor.

Mr. Langdon: Madam Chairman, one of the rules of the House, as I understand it, is that the word of a Member of Parliament, especially on as specific a point as this, is accepted—

Mr. Andre: It works the other way, too. You have to accept that an invitation was sent. He said so.