

● (1450)

[English]

TRADE

CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT— EMPLOYMENT PROJECTION

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for International Trade whom I would like to congratulate on his new position. I would also like to ask him about the Economic Council report this morning. That report showed a reduction from 189,000 jobs to only 76,000 jobs in its analysis of direct 10-year effects from the trade agreement. Does this not show that Canada in fact got a worse deal than the Economic Council expected last summer, and that in fact we were badly out-bargained by the United States?

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. Member for his kind words with reference to myself. He and I must be reading from different news releases. I have here in my hands a news release from the Economic Council of Canada.

The Council cautioned against Canada repudiating the agreement because U.S. protectionist forces would probably succeed in having new trade actions launched against this country. That is one of its statements.

At the end of its second release the Council noted that Canadians should not focus on the precise numbers of the projections but on the general thrust of the results.

The projections "tell a consistent story" that approving the free trade agreement will promote economic growth and employment in Canada.

All across Canada. That is the important thing. It is a very positive report.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, may I suggest next time that the Minister read the report rather than reading the press release.

[Translation]

FORECAST BY ECONOMIC COUNCIL OF CANADA—MINISTER'S POSITION

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): I have a supplementary for the Minister. Does he agree that according to this analysis, the five or six cent change in the value of the dollar means that the figures of the Economic Council are no longer valid

[English]

Hon. John C. Crosbie (Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, all studies and forecasts are based upon assumptions. Therefore, the results depend on the assumptions one makes. The hon. gentleman, I believe, was connected with the academic world before he entered the House. We can tell because he makes many assumptions himself and they are all

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unfavourable to the Government. For example, the Council says:

... that it expects the accord will lead to an additional increase in employment of ... about 250,000 jobs ... if productivity grows as strongly as it should.

It says:

Under the most probable scenario, all provinces and most industries would gain in employment and output.

This is what the Council says. It says that the reason for the difference between its former projections and the projections now was that we did not get access to American procurement to as great a degree as previously had been thought. This explains its projections. It says:

If the trade pact is not approved, Canada might lose rather than gain jobs and investment as the United States might react by imposing new protectionist measures against Canadian exports.

The hon. gentleman shows every day his fear about U.S. protectionism. Why doesn't he support this protection against U.S. protectionism?

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[Translation]

EXTERNAL AID

FOOD AID FOR ETHIOPIA—MINISTER'S POSITION

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister for External Relations. Does the Minister realize that famine may again strike thousands of Ethiopians, and could the Minister therefore explain to the House why generous amounts of Canadian aid routed to this country were sent exclusively to the South? Finally, what does the Minister intend to do to ensure that food aid is sent as soon as possible to the North, at least before the rains start, which is in about six weeks?

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the Hon. Member for his question. I can inform him that the Government and I are also very concerned about the present situation in Ethiopia. As the Hon. Member is probably aware, I visited Ethiopia in February and reported at the time to the House. Of course, the situation has changed since then. We know that the war going on in the North is a threat to many millions of lives because it may prevent the food from reaching these people. However, I can inform the Hon. Member that food has been delivered in the North and that all Canadian commitments have been delivered so far, except for two shipments. One is expected to arrive in a matter of days, and its delivery is guaranteed. As for the other shipment now under way, we are looking at various alternatives to find out whether the shipment can be delivered to the people. I can assure the Hon. Member that we are concerned about the situation and that together with other donor countries and multilateral agencies, we are looking at