

Statements by Ministers

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Straw man.

Mr. Broadbent: With regard to investment policy, to use an old phrase, one can only say that there has been a total sell-out of Canadian interests. As I mentioned earlier, there has been a change in the threshold for screening purposes. It has been raised to \$150 million. A company has to have a minimum of that amount of value before it will be covered by any review process whatsoever. This opens the door completely to takeovers from St. John's, Newfoundland, to Victoria, British Columbia.

● (1210)

Another area of policy that I want to touch on, because it has been of particular importance to our provinces and our territories, deals with procurement policies. Governments at the provincial and the territorial level have sensibly used, for their economic development purposes, in a way duplicating what we did as a nation as a whole since 1867, government procurement policies as a means of enhancing employment growth for their own people and their own regions. That, too, will be seriously jeopardized by this agreement that has been entered into, in principle, between our Government and the Government of the United States.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about the particular impact of this agreement on Quebec.

Many components of this agreement are extremely important for Quebecers. First, in the farming sector, the elimination or reduction of tariffs on poultry and eggs will mean disaster for Quebec producers.

As concerns culture, we have made major concessions which will prevent Canada from guaranteeing the promotion of our cultural industries.

According to the Americans, "Canada has agreed that the cultural measures it takes will not impair the benefits the United States would otherwise expect" from this trade agreement. This is what the Americans have said.

As for the Auto Pact, the recent decision of General Motors in Sainte-Thérèse was a positive decision for the residents of that region, but as everyone knows, until quite recently, this plant had many problems on the North American market. In my opinion, if the Government supports a decision to abolish tariffs in this sector, any future decision for new investments could be negative for a small plant such as the one in Sainte-Thérèse.

As concerns regional development subsidies and policies, I simply want to point out that the so-called dispute settlement mechanism proposed in the agreement poses a very serious threat to our regional development policies.

The agreement states that over the next three to five years, the American Government plans to discuss with the Canadian Government certain changes to our regional development

policies. This could be very dangerous for development in Northern Quebec, other regions of Quebec, and even in other provinces.

[*English*]

I want to conclude with one particular item, that is, the dispute settlement mechanism. It has been said by the Prime Minister and by the Minister who is responsible for international trade at various times that the number one goal in these free trade talks was to get a dispute settlement mechanism that would be fair, take into consideration the interests of both countries and be binding, they said, on both countries. What has been produced in this agreement is a dispute settlement mechanism that will not necessarily be fair, and not take into account the interests or rules of subsidies developed jointly by both countries.

What has been produced is an agreement adhered to by the Government of Canada that will see this new mechanism making judgments in a negative way only if they contravene American law. They did not even get their minimum demand, which was an impartial, fair binding dispute settlement mechanism. That is the reality.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Mr. Speaker, I conclude with this comment. The future of Canada, like that of any other nation, cannot be reduced to its commercial relations. A people have a deep interest in developing its own cultural policies, its own social policies, and its own regional development policies. In short, it has an interest in making all those decisions that are central to what ought to be called a civilized life. Among those decisions are commercial, economic decisions, that is true. Commercial and economic decisions are important. But we in this Party say that a nation cannot be reduced to commercial and economic decision-making.

In particular, we say that if we turn over ultimate authority for economic decision-making to the North American market forces, our capacity to develop a healthy, creative, humane, and just Canada will be severely impaired. We say that this decision reached by the Government of Canada is a bad decision now, a bad decision for the future. We believe the Government has a moral obligation to go now to the people of Canada for a confirmation or rejection of this betrayal of Canadian history.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, I am not part of that standing ovation.

I indicated in my speech some moments ago, Mr. Speaker, my intention to table the elements of the agreement which have been included and signed by representatives of both Governments. I am honoured to be able to do so.

I table with you, Mr. Speaker, the document that constitutes the essential elements of a free trade agreement between the