

Supply

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, let us talk about which Party was responsible for opening up Canada's trade opportunities to the world. Who was in government and provided the architecture for establishing the GATT system back in 1948? Who introduced and built up an international trading system? Who opened up the transportation system called the St. Lawrence Seaway? Who had the guts during the last administration to change the railway system in western Canada so that we could move commodities at a lower price? Who provided the leadership and initiatives designed to make sure that we would invest in the infrastructure of Canada so we could move our products, goods and commodities? If the Hon. Member wants to know who has provided leadership, I would ask him with the greatest of respect to extend the speaking hours of the House for another 10 hours so that I could complete the list.

The fact is that the difference between our Party and yours is that we do not limit our trade horizons to the continent of North America. We see our trade as being with the world. That is where we wish to pursue our trade strategy. We want to protect the mining industry of British Columbia—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. I wish Hon. Members would direct questions and comments through me.

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I—

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, in deference to your sensitivities, I—

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I believe I have the floor.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. Did the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) finish his remarks? If so, I now recognize the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade (Mr. McDermid).

Mr. McDermid: Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the Hon. Member's usual bombastic style. He spoke for 20 minutes this morning and made one suggestion in his entire speech. The rest was negativism, pooh-poohing and saying, "Down with what the Government is doing". The only suggestion he made was that we should work with GATT. Right now, the leader in GATT, the country that participated very actively and successfully in Uruguay, is the Canadian Government. Certainly Canada participated in co-operation with other countries. That is what GATT is all about. Members of the NDP do not understand that co-operation is what it is all about.

Was the Hon. Member speaking for himself or was he speaking for his Party? We hear one point of view from the Hon. Member for Saint-Henri—Westmount (Mr. Johnston) who is all for trade negotiations and we hear another from the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry who is against the negotiations. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) agrees with both of them. Which position did the Hon. Member enunciate today, his Party's or his own?

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member wants to know exactly what we will do about trade, I suggest that he does not have very long to wait. The next election will be in about 18 months. Then the Hon. Member will see exactly what a Liberal Government will do to promote trade. If he would cool down his impatience for a while, he will see what we are putting together.

We would be glad to tell him exactly what we are doing now, but the problem is that if we put it all on the table now, the Tories would try to steal half of it but they would bungle that half of it and we would end up worse off than ever. There is no point in giving good ideas to buffoons. They will do with those good ideas what they have done in the past. They will simply stumble over themselves going around in a revolving door.

The Hon. Member wants to know where we stand. I speak for a combined position that was derived from a series of extensive debates in caucus. A paper outlining the position we have taken and will continue to take has been issued. I would be glad to send a copy of it to the Hon. Member at any time.

Mr. McDermid: Send it over.

Mr. Axworthy: I would be more than pleased to do so. I would be happy to send the Hon. Member the entire portfolio of statements that were made while building up a series of trade strategies.

What I would like to point out is very important. The Government itself failed at the outset to follow the recommendations that were put forward by the joint committee, a committee of all Members of Parliament. Part of the problem is that the Government failed to deal with the major trade irritants. It also failed to provide a proper debate in the House of Commons. Such a debate should have outlined exactly where the Government wants to go and how it would get there. It is no wonder that there is confusion.

• (1250)

There could be nothing more important for this Government to do than to provide the House of Commons with the opportunity to examine fully what this trade strategy could be. The Hon. Member was the Parliamentary Secretary last year and he recalls, when the papers were released, that they were supposed to outline the research, the various strategies and the position adopted by the Government. When we got them back, it was as if the John Crosbie pornography Bill had already been applied to them. There was more left out than there was left in. It was like a colouring book. You had to supply your own pencils to fill in the blanks it was so empty. What we can assert, and what we said today, is that the Government's approach to trade strategy is wrong. It is time to reassess that trade strategy. It is time for the Government to sit down with President Reagan and take a look at what the basic premises of the negotiations are, because obviously the Americans are not following them.