

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

I came across another statement today that reminded me of many of the Hon. Members opposite. Someone, though I do not know who, said that it was unfortunate that a mere 90 per cent of politicians give the other 10 per cent a bad name. There is an hon. gentleman back there from some district in Vancouver. He had to scoot all over B.C. to find a district that would accept him. I am glad to see he snook back in. It is nice to see him back here because he is not a bad chap for a socialist.

• (2350)

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: I want to deal for a couple of moments with something which the Member from Malpeque said today about regional development. How long, oh Lord, do we have to go on with this talk about regional development and how the Free Trade Agreement is somehow going to put a stop to regional development policies in Canada? How could we put a stop to them when they are in the very Constitution itself? That this country is dedicated to overcoming regional disparity is in the very Constitution.

Many hon. persons opposite are supporters of GATT. The critic for the NDP would not come to our GATT meeting in Montreal last week because his Leader would not pass on the invitation to him. I personally wanted to see him at the GATT to see how he would perform when he saw there was a GATT, when he got himself torn away from his fixation with the U.S. Free Trade Agreement. I was hoping to see him and the Hon. Member from "Winnipeg Soft Centre" at the GATT as well but, no, he did not turn up at the GATT.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: I do not know where the Member from "Winnipeg Soft Centre" was when the GATT meeting was on. I am glad to see the Hon. Member for Sudbury is back in the House. I have never heard him make sense, but he is often amusing and that makes up for it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Chairman, I rise on a point of order. I would like to suggest that the Minister stick to the subject, though I know it is difficult since he has not read the deal. I very much hope that he will come across with some comments about this trade deal rather than about extraneous subjects.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Chairman, we can all be thankful at what we are saving his students from.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: The Hon. Member from "Windsor—Woeful" should just sit back and relax.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Let us look at the Free Trade Agreement and regional development. There happens to be a General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade that was entered into by the Liberal Government of the day in 1947, I believe it was. Ever since 1947 there has been a subsidies code of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. I know that this is news to the Hon. Member from "Winnipeg Soft Centre" who has never looked at the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trades. I do not know what he has ever looked at frankly, except the mirror.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Article 8 and Article 11 of the Subsidies Code of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade read like this: "Subsidies are used by Governments to promote important objectives of social and economic policy. Among such objectives are the elimination of industrial economic and social disadvantages of specific regions."

In other words, ever since 1947, Governments have been given the imprimatur. They have been given permission. They have been given consent. They have been given the go ahead. They have been given the okay. They have been given the nod to go ahead and subsidize within their own countries for certain purposes, to promote important objectives of social and economic policy, including the elimination of industrial, economic and social disadvantages of specific regions. I am from a region that has suffered from industrial, economic and social disadvantages for 400 years, and I am the living proof of it.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Crosbie: Do you think for one moment that I am going to support a Free Trade Agreement that does away with the possibility of assistance from my own region which suffers from industrial, economic and social disadvantages? Do you think that the Premier of Newfoundland—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!