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to the root cause of our problem rather than to engage in fire-fighting here and there, hither and yon. What we need is an approach that will provide more general protection to Canadian interests that are now under serious assault.

We were not elected to the House of Commons to sit here and do nothing. We were elected to the House of Commons to accept the responsibility, to face up to very real threats that endanger the future of Canadians across the country. That is what we are doing. In the spirit of the first ministers who met last night, who overcame their partisan differences and their other doubts to provide a common front as Canada enters into these negotiations, I hope that there will be a willingness here to try to put in place a much better arrangement. Obviously, tough actions are necessary. The Government has taken tough actions when they were necessary.

Mr. Riis: Like what?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): An Hon. Member asks: "Like what?" We have taken positions with regard to the United States' request that there be a delay of one year in the implementation of the decision respecting Georges Bank. We have said that there will be no such delay. We have taken decisions such as was announced yesterday by my colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), indicating the economic response of Canada to the shakes and shingles measures that were taken. We will continue to take these strong responses because they are necessary to ensure realistic trade negotiations.

Someone talked about a trade war. Of course, one of the dangers, one of the temptations to Members of Parliament interested in partisan advantage, rather than advancing the debate, is to use words and language that create false fear in the country. Let it be very clear that there is no trade war between Canada and the United States. Any trade war is within the United States itself between protectionists, on the one hand, who want to pull the United States inward at whatever cost to its friends, and on the other hand certain American leaders, including the President, who want more open trading relations with the world and, in particular, with their friends. That trade war in the United States is virulent. Protectionist forces are rising. They threaten every region of Canada. We saw that conflict coming. That is why we are seeking a trade arrangement, to protect our access to U.S. markets, to seek new opportunities for new and better jobs for Canadians and to establish a model, a model of trading relations that can provide an alternative to protectionism.

As a first step, we sought the Quebec Accord, seeking guarantees that one country will not take protectionist measures of a discriminatory nature against the other. That agreement was broken once on shakes and shingles. Our response, including the measures announced by the Minister of Finance yesterday, was designed to demonstrate how central we consider that Quebec Accord to be to successful conduct of these negotiations. We believe the United States has received our message.

• (1220)

I want to talk a little about standstill. Surely Hon. Members opposite would not suggest that we seek a standstill agreement which would be more binding upon Canada than it would be upon the United States. That would be the situation, given the inherent differences in our system; that is the inevitable conclusion one must draw from what the NDP is putting forward. Surely the Opposition would not suggest that Canadian farmers be arbitrarily denied their right to seek relief from injurious imports from the United States of subsidized agricultural products. That is what the NDP is proposing. Surely the Opposition is not suggesting that the federal Government unilaterally take on commitments which could well apply to the provinces.

There is no magic solution to shield us during these negotiations. Individual issues will have to be addressed on their merits under the existing rules and laws until such time as we are able to negotiate a better framework. That is why we are in this business; that is why we are involved in the negotiations. It is our expectation that in cases where there is discretion, both sides will honour the commitment to halt protectionism in cross-border trade in goods and services. That was the spirit or essence of the Quebec Accord. We expect that it will be honoured.

We know that this will involve difficult decisions in specific cases. I discussed this matter at some length with Secretary of State Shultz in Halifax last Friday. I am confident, following those discussions, that the need for advanced notification and consultations on specific issues is accepted. I reject suggestions that we should hold the trade negotiations hostage to specific trade irritants. Events of the last two weeks provide compelling evidence that current international trade rules do not provide the certainty and security of access to the U.S. markets which Canadian producers need to plan and to invest. They offer compelling evidence that arbitrary U.S. border measures create grave hardship for those Canadians whose livelihood depends upon bilateral trade in those products.

Trade negotiations are in Canada's interest. The *status quo* is not good enough. We need improved rules. Changes in the rules could only be achieved through negotiation. This Government recognizes the need to put our trade and economic relationship on a better basis. We are pursuing that objective both bilaterally and multilaterally under the GATT. We are pursuing it both internationally through trade and domestically by bringing growth and job creation back to the Canadian economy. These trade negotiations are so clearly of benefit to Canada and to Canadians that it would be irresponsible to abandon them because of issues of the day.

I invite Hon. Members of the House of Commons to consider a question very carefully. Fishermen in Atlantic Canada, asbestos workers in Quebec, steelworkers in Ontario and Saskatchewan, uranium producers in Saskatchewan, shake and shingle producers in British Columbia, and farmers and lumbermen across Canada have one thing in common—their livelihood depends upon access to the United States market.