

Private Members' Business

In addition to dispute resolution procedures, the bill also presents amendments to a number of other federal acts which need to be changed in order that we meet our obligations to the provinces and territories to make the changes to federal legislation and regulations necessary to implement the agreement which we signed last year. All parties to the agreement were informed on April 12 in Calgary that the federal government would be introducing these amendments in the near future.

Our work to date has emphasized the value of the co-operative approach to solving trade problems internally in Canada. Our work in the future will do so as well. That is the very reason the agreement on internal trade has been criticized by members of the Reform Party for not going far enough fast enough. Other members opposite would have had the government act unilaterally. They have suggested under sections 91(a) and 121 of the Constitution to impose free internal trade on the provinces. That is the very thing the other opposition party accuses us of having done. Both criticisms are purely and simply ill founded and wrong headed.

[Translation]

The government tried to resolve this country's problems in collaboration with the provincial governments. The process leading up to the Free Trade Agreement bears witness to this. It has been our approach in the past, it is our approach now and it is the only approach that any responsible Canadian government can take in the future. It is the only way to govern and that is what real power is.

Cases where the federal government is the grievor in a disagreement under the Free Trade Agreement will be few. If a dispute were settled in favour of the federal government and if the province in question were to refuse to respect the conclusions of the impartial panel, the federal government would have the right to withdraw equivalent benefits.

Such retaliatory measures should be taken in the same sector as the initial violation or in another sector covered by the accord.

[English]

Retaliation could not involve transfer payments or social programs because these things are not covered by the agreement. Bill C-88 does not make the federal government a policeman of the internal trade agreement as the official opposition has claimed.

[Translation]

Bill C-88 only covers the federal government's obligations under the interprovincial trade accord, nothing more. The interprovincial trade accord is a consensual accord. All parties

to this accord are responsible for applying it in their own jurisdictions and for meeting its requirements.

[English]

What we have heard over this day of debate is a series of allegations founded on misapprehension, perhaps wilful misunderstanding of the contents of bills before the House.

The agreement on internal trade we want to see broadened, deepened and strengthened. There is a lot more work to do. I call on the official opposition, since the Government of Quebec has claimed to be a free trader, not to put up roadblocks to a real free internal trading market within Canada but to begin to support it with actions instead of protestations.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): It being 5.30 p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that, pursuant to Standing Order 81, proceedings on this motion have expired.

[English]

The House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

LEGAL RECOGNITION OF SAME SEX SPOUSES

The House resumed from April 26 consideration of the motion.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): At the time of adjournment on Wednesday, April 26, 1995 the hon. member for Elk Island had seven minutes remaining for debate.

Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, this is the second time I have had a speech interrupted by a period of some two to three months. It is difficult to keep one's train of thought when that happens. However, I shall review the beginning of my speech and then carry on.

We are debating the motion put forward by the hon. member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve which has to do with the government taking the necessary measures to recognize same sex spouses. In my intervention last April 26, before I was interrupted, I was stating that as legislators, we have a responsibility, an obligation, a high calling to do what is right for our country and its citizens. Very often debates such as this are limited because we allow our emotions to enter into them to such an extent that we sometimes fail to ask the real questions. We need to ask some very serious questions about this issue. Where are