

Free Trade

account and return to the Chamber at the earliest opportunity and decide on the matter.

I have listened carefully for nearly an hour, because it is an important matter. It is an important motion in front of the Chamber and the amendment is important to both the opposition Parties and has been strongly argued for. I will take all of that into account.

Resuming debate with the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon).

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, as each of the speakers for the three Parties has suggested, this is certainly an historic debate. Therefore, we have to put it very much in a broad perspective. It is important to forget some of the name calling that has taken place and the short-term bickering that has occurred and to think about the future of our country in a world where a period of post-war prosperity is no longer assured to us. That is the fact that dominates this debate. The prosperity which we were used to as a country in the period since 1945 has ceased to become something upon which we can count.

In that sense, it is a period much like the 1840s when prosperity in Canada was hit by changing trade relations as the United Kingdom itself moved to free trade, and in turn the business elite of that time in panic issued the Annexation Manifesto of 1849. The manifesto is described by the pre-eminent historian of that period, J.M.S. Careless, as being signed by "a list which read chiefly like a roster of Montreal's business elite". Of course, that Annexation Manifesto, which I have here, called for Canada to join the United States.

It is fascinating to look through the arguments put forward in that Annexation Manifesto. For example, it states "—the Canadian market is too limited to tempt the foreign capitalist". Where, Mr. Speaker, have we heard that argument in the debate in front of us in 1987? Another quote is, "The proposed union would render Canada a field for American capital into which it would enter as freely for the prosecution of public works and private enterprise as into any of the present States". Where have we heard that argument, if not from the government benches? This annexation "—would increase our commerce, both with the United States and foreign countries, and would not necessarily diminish to any great extent our intercourse with Great Britain, into which our products would, for the most part, enter on the same times as at the present".

The Annexation Manifesto further states, "At the same time there is every reason to believe that our shipbuilders, as well at Quebec as on the Great Lakes, would find an unlimited market in all the ports of the American continent".

One could continue, Mr. Speaker, but I think perhaps the point is made that the Annexation Manifesto of 1849 made similar arguments for continental union, for joining the United States, as have been made by this Government in trying to

support what in effect is the annexation manifesto of 1987: this free trade agreement which is in front of us.

Perhaps this deal has only one difference, and that difference is a history which perhaps finds itself in a comment which is often made of history, "History repeats itself the second time as farce". It seems to me that the Government, and the way that it has gone forth in trying to seek this trade agreement with the United States, has given us the greatest long-running farce which this country has ever seen, a farce which has included hearings across the country at which the public could not even testify. Those hearings were not even advertised in the city in which they were held. Those hearings across the country, believe it or not, Mr. Speaker, took place even before a final text of the free trade agreement had been prepared.

If that was not farce enough, we had to add to the craziness and the bizarre quality of this whole mad escapade the fact that the studies which exist with reference to this deal's impact on our economy are still kept secret. We still cannot have access under the Access to Information Act. For instance, we cannot have access to studies on auto parts and how they will be hit by this deal. That is of extreme importance to my constituency and to many constituencies across the country.

• (1610)

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Tell us about IODE.

Mr. Langdon: I suspect that it may even be of extreme importance to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) if he sat and thought about it.

Also it is important to see, for the farce that it is, the timing which has been established to look at the agreement. Absolutely no time has been given to Members of Parliament, to interest groups throughout the country, to corporations, to trade unions, to churches, or to farm groups, all of whom expressed strong views when they talked with us as we went across the country as part of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade. Absolutely no time has been given to these groups to look at this incredibly complex deal. It is possible that Ministers receive précis of these deals which are not given to opposition critics. We spend our weekends trying to pore through every word. Let me tell the House that it is a complex, complicated, difficult deal, and we are leaving ourselves one week for possible debate on a deal which can fundamentally change the country in virtually all its aspects. That is farce, that is farce.

Just to add to the farce, we have as well a tremendous, in fact stupendous, amount of money being spent by the Government. Over \$12 million will be spent, not to circulate neutral information around the country so that people can analyse the deal and come to conclusions, but to produce pamphlets, videos, hand-outs, and synopses which do not represent faithfully in any sense what is actually within the deal. To me that seems to be history as farce.