

Supply

barriers. While Canada urgently requires more open access to U.S. markets, it also has a desperate need for security of that very important access.

In addition to providing more secure access, it is to be expected that a new agreement will result in the elimination of some other substantial barriers to trade other than tariffs. That would be things such as "buy America" provisions which severely restrict the market for Government procurement. A trade agreement could open up that very substantial market which amounts, at present, to something in the order of \$500 billion per year.

In summary, we in Canada find ourselves at a critical crossroads in our history. The choice we face is threefold. We can hold to our present course, which threatens to lead to a continuation of the erosion of our international competitive position which has been under way for some years, and a continuing decline in the comparative well-being of the Canadian economy in terms of growth, production, jobs, and wealth. One alternative to this is to do nothing. That course is to retreat behind the protective walls of "fortress Canada", which I am sure most Canadians will recognize as a sure-fire recipe for disaster on the part of a nation which has lived by trade with the rest of the world for so many years.

Finally, we can choose to follow the course of substantially reducing the barriers between Canada and the United States which is the only road that offers the promise of substantially strengthening our economy and bolstering its ability to grow and prosper in a fiercely competitive world. Is it any wonder that most Canadians have concluded that there is no real alternative to the approach to trade that the federal Government has elected to follow with the firm support of a broad segment of our nation? Surely this is an idea whose time has really come.

Mr. Lesick: Mr. Speaker, I hope the television cameras have allowed Canadians throughout the nation to hear my colleague, the Member for Sarnia—Lambton (Mr. James), speak this afternoon. He told us the facts. He spoke the truth. He has been in the House all day listening to Opposition Members and Members of the Government speak. His speech was positive. It told us that we do require a comprehensive trade agreement. We heard all of his good reasons for this and all of Canada should know about them. A 28 per cent increase in manufacturing will mean lower prices and more jobs. What we need more than anything is assured access to American markets. That is what the comprehensive trade agreement will achieve for us.

I know that my colleague, the Member for Sarnia—Lambton, listened carefully to the remarks of Members of the Opposition. Why are Opposition Members afraid of trying something new, different, and positive such as the Member spoke about? The Opposition has been swinging at puffs of smoke. Why do Members of the Opposition have these fears?

Mr. James: Mr. Speaker, I do not understand where members of the Opposition are coming from. They seem to be

contradicting themselves so many times. This afternoon I heard an Hon. Member speaking about the 10-10 vote of the Senators. Could you imagine the hue and cry there would have been if the Senators had voted "no"? When the Senators on the Finance Committee were deliberating, we heard that a number of them were concerned about whether to vote positively. Members on the NDP benches wondered why the Government had not sent representatives down there to communicate. The next minute they do not want to communicate. I am not sure where this comes from. I am sure that if the Senate Finance Committee had voted "no" they would have said that that was a terrible thing.

The other thing that concerns me is the lack of objectivity in the rhetoric. The Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon) was speaking this morning with doom and gloom and telling us the reasons why we should not enter these negotiations. He did not seem to have any objectivity. It seems that one can say anything in this House without any facts to back it up. He said that they never agreed to countervail.

Another thing that really gets me excited is that the President said he would like to clean up the countervail situation on softwood lumber. This morning the Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) said that that is what he wanted to have done. This afternoon someone said that it is bad that the President wants to have that cleaned up. They seem to have a problem making up their own minds. The Government has made up its mind that negotiating a trade agreement with the U.S. will give us jobs, which is what the country needs.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, perhaps I can shed some light for the last two Members who asked what the Opposition is concerned about with regard to dealing with something new. We have had free trade in softwood lumber for half a century. This is nothing new. We have had, by and large, a very good trading relationship with the United States in softwood lumber. However, because of the difference in currency, and because our mills now rank among the most efficient in productivity anywhere in the world, and because our labour force also ranks among the most productive anywhere in the world in the woods industry, we are able to out-compete the Americans on their own turf. We have had free trade in lumber for 50 years. They now want to stop free trade.

We have done so well in that area that the Americans are afraid of the Canadian competition. We are concerned that that same mentality will be extended to a whole variety of commodity and product areas. Is this what free trade is all about? That is the reason we have indicated concern about the open-ended support for the free trade concept.

Mr. James: Mr. Speaker, that is why I am concerned that the Opposition is negative about entering into a trade agreement with the U.S. The Minister of International Trade (Mr. Kelleher) said from the outset that one of the main reasons for negotiating an agreement with the U.S. would be to negotiate away the countervail situation which exists. That is always a possibility under GATT. We hope to be able to negotiate on