

Free Trade

Miss Carney: Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to take unlimited time, I just intend to deal with a few more things and then we can listen to the remarks of the Opposition.

We were talking about regional development and the Hon. Member yelled, "What about countervail?" May I remind him that our laws and the American laws in this area are entirely consistent with the GATT. This free trade agreement is negotiated within the provisions of the GATT. Our complaint with the Americans in the past in the case of potash, softwood and other issues was what we viewed as an unfair process in the application of these laws. That provision has been met with this binational dispute settlement mechanism. There will be an element of fairness involved when people know that trade remedy cases will be going before an impartial board of Canadians and Americans. Further we have made an improvement in this area. There is an appeal process on very narrow grounds if there is any suspicion of fraud or conflict of interest in these areas, and we have strengthened the dispute settlement mechanism in the final agreement.

I want to point out that for 10 years we have been net exporters of direct investment. Most of that has gone to the United States. This agreement now provides more secure access for investors in the U.S. and assurances of non-discriminatory treatment. That is very important for us because it gives us security of our investment in the U.S.

Since it is a balanced agreement, it gives security in Canada to American investment. If you ask why that is so important, Mr. Speaker, it is because the previous Liberal administration under the National Energy Program expropriated other people's property and the Americans want to ensure that no future Government can adopt those Liberal policies again.

In terms of adjustment, the agreement does not limit us in any way from helping people to adjust to the new trading regime. On the contrary, it provides for a generous phasing-in period over 10 years. Our Government, as the Prime Minister says, is ready to assist Canadian workers who need retraining and ready to assist companies wanting to take greater advantage of the new market opportunities.

If you look at the free trade agreement and see the lower prices to consumers which will flow from the elimination of tariffs, something very important to seniors and to all Canadians; if you look at the new markets that will be created and the new jobs that will be created, you will see why this agreement is very much in the national interest.

I have tried to limit my remarks to what is in the free trade agreement to educate and enlighten members of the Opposition because many of them clearly have not read it. I would like the opposition Parties, because this is a historic debate, to tell the House what alternatives they propose.

Mr. Riis: Right on.

Mr. Axworthy: We will.

Miss Carney: We know what the NDP proposes. The New Democrats are entirely against this agreement. They want to stop it and stay in the narrow little world of protectionism.

Mr. Riis: Absolutely false.

Miss Carney: They want to stay in the Dark Ages. They want to retreat into the 19th century.

Mr. Riis: Untruth.

Miss Carney: They refuse to grow up and realize that in the world we have today we have been liberalizing and freeing trade and reducing barriers, but that is not the kind of world the New Democrats want.

Mr. Riis: You are incorrect, Pat.

Miss Carney: In the case of the Liberals we are rather confused about what they propose. First their leader has proposed walking away from the agreement. Then he proposed tearing up the agreement, all 2,000 pages of it. Lately he has been talking about how it is better for some regions than others. He has indicated that he may want to have a second look at the agreement. I think it is time the Liberals told us where they stand on the free trade agreement. Do they totally oppose it? What will they put in its place?

Mr. Frith: We have it right here, in colour.

Miss Carney: I can hardly wait, Mr. Speaker.

This agreement will go into force January 1, 1989.

Mr. Axworthy: There will be an election first. You will be defeated and it will be all over.

Miss Carney: What are they going to do on January 1, 1989 or, say, February 1, 1989? Will they put the tariffs back on all those items in 1989? Will they dismantle the dispute settlement mechanism? Will they dismantle the panels of experts and dismantle the whole appeal process?

Mr. Axworthy: It doesn't matter anyway.

Miss Carney: Will they put the red meat barriers back, on all the other agricultural goods which will be so damaging to the agricultural community? Will they put up the barriers to energy which we have just negotiated away in our own energy policy and enshrined in the free trade agreement?

Mr. Gauthier: That is nonsense, and you know it.

Miss Carney: In 1989 what do they propose to do? Do they propose to put back all the barriers that we so carefully have negotiated away? That is what Canadians want to know.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, the Minister for International Trade (Miss Carney) opened her remarks by saying that this was a historic moment