

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

**An Hon. Member:** Let's hear it, Sheila.

**Mr. Speaker:** I wonder if Hon. Members would stop to consider for just a moment. A complaint was raised. It may or may not have been a matter about which the Hon. Member is complaining. The reference may have been to something else. But the Hon. Member felt that it was a reference to something which is sacred to many of us, and I think that I dealt with it as it should be. I would ask other Hon. Members, especially in this week, to let the matter go.

Orders of the Day.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### CANADA-UNITED STATES FREE TRADE AGREEMENT IMPLEMENTATION ACT

#### MEASURE TO ENACT

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Crosbie that Bill C-2, an Act to implement the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States of America, be now read the second time and referred to a Committee of the Whole; and the amendment of Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra) (p. 127).

**Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Agriculture):** Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this very important debate. At the outset I want to extend to you, Sir, my personal congratulations and the congratulations of the electorate of the constituency of Vegreville for your re-elevation to the high office of Speaker of the House. You have distinguished yourself in a very exemplary way and I know that you will do equally well in the Thirty-fourth Parliament.

I also want to add my congratulations and best wishes to the Deputy Speaker and Chairman of Committees who joins you in the affairs of the House.

I want to deal with four issues in the course of my speech today. First, I want to deal with the mandate and whether in fact the Government has a clear mandate to proceed with this legislation. I want to refer briefly to the opposition tactics. Then I want to talk about the impact and the benefits that this deal will have for western Canada, particularly agriculture.

First let us deal with the issue of the mandate. I find it strange that the Opposition is putting a peculiar interpretation on the outcome of this election. It seems to me that when a Party gets a majority of seats it indeed has the right to govern the country and put in place its legislative program.

I was drawn to the December 5 editorial in the *Winnipeg Free Press* which I think puts this into a very clear context. It said:

The purpose of an election is to provide the winning party with a mandate to govern the country for a limited period of time.

The Mulroney government won that mandate on November 21. So long as it continues to enjoy the support of a majority of members of the House of Commons, it has a legal and moral right to exercise that mandate—to legislate, to raise and lower taxes, to administer the country and to enter into treaties.

I believe that this pretty well summarizes and puts the issue into context. What the Opposition is injecting into this debate is the 50 per cent rule. If we applied the 50 per cent rule we would have some 80 Conservative Members elected to the House, 30 or 32 Liberals and 10 or 12 New Democrats. As the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) pointed out the other night, we probably would not have the Leader of the Opposition or the Leader of the New Democratic Party in the House.

What kind of convoluted interpretation is that? We should get off it. If we go back to 1965, the Liberal Party which was the governing Party of the day garnered 40 per cent of the vote. In 1968, it had 45.5 per cent and that was considered to be a landslide. In 1972, it garnered 38.5 per cent of the vote. I do not know if the Liberal Government had a mandate to proceed with the establishment of Petro-Canada. Liberal Members certainly did not talk about that during the election campaign. Notwithstanding that fact, they brought in Petro-Canada and a great deal of legislation that was repugnant to western Canada and to other regions of Canada.

• (1510)

In 1974 the Liberals got 43.2 per cent of the vote, and then in 1979 they lost the election. In 1980 they got 43.9 per cent of the vote, at which time we changed the face of Canada. There was no talk about constitutional reform during that election campaign. The issue was 18 cents a gallon. The Liberals said they would not bring in an 18 cent a gallon tax. I suppose they were quite right. It was closer to 70 cents or 80 cents a gallon. However, they did not talk about a national energy program that would devastate the West, they did not talk about a