

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The period for questions and comments has now expired. Resuming debate.

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Madam Speaker, the ancient Greeks saw nature as being comprised of four basic elements, the earth, the air, water and fire. As the environment critic today, I want to talk about the impact of the trade agreement on all four basic elements of our life. I want to begin with water.

John the Baptist baptised with water. Water is a symbol of life. For the ancient Greek, water was the primal substance out of which everything else was created. We know, especially this summer with the effects of the drought on western farmers and producers, just how important water is to us. We know that we do not have too much of it and we are wasting it very badly.

What do we have with this trade agreement but a Government that has given away on this most basic substance of life? I would like to refer to some expert testimony of Mr. Mel Clark, consultant to the Rosan Academy of Aquatic Science and a former GATT negotiator for Canada. He is someone very well versed in water in international trade. He stated that the free trade agreement will override domestic legislation. When there is a conflict between the two, it is imperative there be an explicit exclusion of fresh water in the trade agreement itself. As the agreement now stands, water has been included. Not only has water not been excluded, but it is included in the FTA, both implicitly and explicitly.

Let me explain, using the expert testimony before the Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade. In Article 408, export taxes apply to the export of any good. Article 409 applies to the export of a good. Article 201 states that the goods of a party means domestic products as these are understood in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Tariffs covering water have been included for many years in the schedules annexed to the GATT. GATT has adopted the harmonized system for classifying goods for customs and tariffs and it contains an item for water. It is beyond reasonable doubt that GATT understands water to be a good. Then there is explicit evidence where water is included in the tariffs schedules in the agreement.

Two conclusions emerge from the evidence. First, the FTA includes all natural water, regardless of how it is packaged or transported. It is not just limited to bottled water which has been the excuse used by the buffoon of a Minister who has tried to joke about this matter and to make light of it. It is a serious matter, indeed. Americans themselves understand that water has been included and, indeed, American Congressmen have made a big point that this is one of the advantages to the free trade agreement to them. Because their water problems

are even more serious than ours, their drought more serious, their supplies of water much more badly affected, they are looking to the possibility of water imports in cases of shortages.

Mr. Clark raises one actually very scary possibility. In the event water sharing is required, how would the sharing be? Would it be on a ten to one basis, according to our population, or would it be on a nation to nation basis, a fifty-fifty sharing? I do not know, but it seems to me any kind of sharing on that basis, where we are forced, is certainly something we would not want to get into. We might want to share, particularly if we relate it to conservation measures. We might well want to share in the question of shortage with our neighbours, or with other people for that matter, but to be forced into it by a binding agreement is quite another matter completely.

Let us also be very clear that having a separate Bill or amendment to Canadian legislation does not cover the situation. It simply does not. It is the text of the agreement itself that will count. If there is any conflict between what is in the agreement, and water is in the agreement, and what we have in some Canadian law, it is the agreement that counts. It is not what some Minister, who will not be around after a while, says, and not what is in Canadian law. If I have an agreement with you, Madam Speaker, that I am going to sell you my house, but in a memo to myself I exempt the second storey of my house, you would take me to court. The text of the contract, in the case of any conflict between the parties, actually counts.

[Translation]

Madam Speaker, water is included in the Agreement, inasmuch as water is included in the GATT. It is considered property under the GATT. The chief negotiator in the sell-out of Canada to the Americans was Mr. Reisman. Who is Mr. Reisman? A man who favours water exports. He even put forward the James bay project, the idea of a huge canal, which would make the Bay a body of fresh water.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I am sorry to have to interrupt the Member, but she will be given 14 minutes to speak when the debate resumes. It being 1 p.m., I do now leave the chair until 2 p.m. this day.

At 1 p.m. the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.