

Supply

• (1655)

The member for South Shore talked about the productivity of Canadians. We do not dispute that, but let us not underestimate the productivity of Mexicans. Their productivity is increasing and they are becoming more and more competitive with Canadians.

To say that they are malcontents and less than ambitious is not true. They are quite productive and quite efficient and it is at our peril to attempt to compete with them on that playing field when their hourly wages in the Maquiladora could be 80 cents per hour. It is out and out worker exploitation.

For those who suggest that this will open up the Mexican market of 80 million people I ask them what they anticipate the Mexican people will buy from Canada at those wages. I would encourage members on the government side to go down there and deal with the reality of the Mexican Maquiladora area.

I would also tell them to not accept the fact that the framework of NAFTA is going forward with as much haste and as much acceptance in Washington as it is in Ottawa, by the government side. The politicians, labour groups, and environmental groups in Washington are not at all sold on the fact that this NAFTA agreement will go forward. If the vote were held today NAFTA would be defeated.

Unfortunately this government says that really does not matter and we have to go forward with as much haste as we possibly can. It has changed its attitude toward the parallel accords. At first they were of no concern to us, they were between Mexico and the United States. Then we had to go to the table, we still did not have a strategy in place but we said we had best get to that table.

The Clinton administration has made it abundantly clear. If the parallel accords have no teeth it will not sign the accord and will not support the NAFTA agreement that is in place. The members of the administration are going group by group down to Mexico to see what they are dealing with. That is all I am asking.

I would ask the government members to get down there and see the reality. We met with some of the promoters on the American side in Washington last week. One of the pro-NAFTA people, a patriarch of the American Congress, talked derisively of labour standards. He said: "Parallel accords, whatever they mean;

labour standards, whatever that is; environmental protection, whatever that means. You just cannot negotiate these kinds of things". That is pretty scary talk and a pretty scary attitude.

He also went on to say, and I agree with him on this statement: "If the parallel accords have any substantive-ness to them then they will unravel the original agreement and that is impossible. We are not going to open that agreement". The Americans are in a conundrum right now. I am happy for that. I hope the conundrum continues.

I wish that this government would open its eyes to some of the perils of this agreement. It continually trots out very powerful statistics indicating that our exports into the American market have increased. We accept that. They increased before 1988 as well. The government does not trot out statistics which show that our exports to many other countries have declined. Those are the kinds of statistics that we suggest it is not bringing forward and which it definitely should bring forward.

• (1700)

Another issue, perhaps in isolation but once again it is one of those issues that is presently in committee and I hope it will see the light of day in the House very soon, is that of family trusts. It is part of the taxation system in this country that the fabulously wealthy have been able to protect their fortunes for a long period of time. It would appear, after 21 years of protection of the wealthiest people in this country, that new legislation will allow these people to set aside their hundreds of millions of dollars in these family trusts for another 20, 30 or 40 years.

These trusts have gone untaxed for 21 years. We do not know how many of them there are. There were 22,000 family trusts in 1972, the value of which we do not know. We do know that one of them was worth \$70 million, and that amount went untaxed year after year.

The suggestion is that 21 years is not enough time for these people to get their income tax house in order, so give them more time. I asked average taxpayers how much time they have to get their tax house in order? They get 12 months to get it in order or else. The government says that it has to extend the rule to protect the family trusts a little bit longer, another 20, 30 or 40 years, because some of these people are going to have to see a lawyer and lawyers are costly. Shame.