

*Supply*

responsibility. I acknowledge a thousand weaknesses in the free trade deal, and I do not think anyone in this House would ever question where I stood on the free trade agreement. My question to the member is this. Does he not think that there are some existing trade agreements with the Americans, i.e. the auto pact, that he would throw into jeopardy by an irresponsible tone or an irresponsible approach to this existing document?

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** A very short answer, the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Madam Speaker, I did not advocate, as the member said, scrapping all agreements with the United States. I talked about the FTA and the North American free trade agreement.

The member does point out, quite rightly, that the bind that the country has been put in with respect to our relationship with the United States by this agreement, because what he is trying to do is imply that if we were to get out of these agreements, the form of American retaliation might be, for instance, the cancelling of the auto pact. I presume that is what he suggests.

This is why it was so misleading for the Prime Minister to say in 1988: "Well, it is just a commercial agreement; if we don't like it we will just get out of it".

I tried to be honest in my own remarks about the consequences of getting out of it; the consequences of it could be nasty. I said that. I tried to say that Canadians will have to make that choice. They will have to choose between the difficulty of staying in the agreement and the difficulty of being out of it. I say we choose the difficulty of being out of it. That is fair enough. I want to know what difficulty you choose.

**Hon. William C. Winegard (Minister for Science):** Madam Speaker, it is a little hard to know from the tone of the conversation so far, but this is a serious debate we are undertaking here today. The continued success of our trade performance is critical to our future prosperity as a nation. I think every Canadian from coast to coast to coast has a stake in the export success of our entrepreneurs and that is why this government from the day it took office has placed international trade at the top of its agenda.

We have pursued a strategy aimed at making Canada an international competitor worthy of the tough global economy that we have today. I emphasize "global" and I emphasize "today".

We do not live in the past, nor do we intend to. We cannot lift the drawbridge and keep the world out. We have faith in the ability of Canadian companies to compete with known rules of the game. That is really what this is about. To be successful our trade strategy must reflect the realities of today's global economy and Canada's place in it. Regretfully there is no room for romantic and fanciful delusions based on past or imagined successes.

• (1050)

The resolution before us today gives the illusion of promoting a global strategy, but at heart it is a council of despair. It seeks a world that simply does not exist, a world that would ignore the realities of geography, a world that would not recognize the benefits of foreign investment, a world that would tear up our trade agreements, isolate us from our principal trading partners; a world that would turn its back on the achievements of the past, as emphasized by the comments from my colleague from Mississauga, and leave us naked before the challenges of tomorrow.

This government's approach to international market development, to international trade negotiations and to international trade relations has been based on the fundamental premise that Canada is a global trading nation, no more, no less. It also recognizes that we live next door to the richest and most advanced economy on earth. Other countries would give their eye teeth to be so blessed. It is not an unmixed blessing, as we know so well, but surely it is a blessing and let us not believe otherwise.

The United States is our best customer and we are theirs. Last year alone we did \$256 billion worth of business between the two countries. No other countries come close to that. It is quality business. It is not just rocks and logs but it is cars and computers. It is software and engineering contracts. It is satellites and subway cars. It is flight simulators and wing assemblies. The Japanese would love to do that much business, so would the Mexicans and the Europeans and indeed, everyone else; except it seems members opposite.