

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

defence security measures retains controls in all those vital areas, something which they are debating now.

What has happened with this agreement? We have given it away. Close to 20 per cent of industries will no longer be covered. Therefore they will no longer have the right as Canadians to say: "Wait a minute", whether it is a small business firm in Winnipeg that comes up with a new product or some group from Kansas City which wants to buy it up and say: "We will take it over". We have no right any more under this agreement to say: "But keep the technology here and the jobs here". They can strip it within 24 hours, move the technology and research back and we will never see it again. That, I say to the Hon. Member for Winnipeg South, is how this country is losing its ability to manage itself.

Mr. McDermid: I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker. Will the Hon. Member entertain a question?

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): No, Madam Speaker. The fact is that the Minister for International Trade was less than forthcoming this morning. We simply want to follow in the example of his leadership. The fact is that the Minister for the homeless and the Hon. Member for Winnipeg South do not like what they are hearing. They cannot accept the reality of what they are hearing. They find themselves uncomfortable and uneasy. They have a bad itch where they are sitting. That does not mean to say that we will stop talking. We still have something like 36 hours, and they will hear it all. They will hear every word of it.

Mrs. McDougall: We have heard all those lies before.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Madam Speaker, I draw your attention to a matter of privilege. The Minister of Employment has said that these are lies. That is against the rules of the House. I think we either ask the Minister to withdraw or have her withdraw from the House. I am raising that first point as a matter of privilege.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): I did not hear the comment. If the Hon. Minister feels that she has said something that is unparliamentary, she will withdraw. I did not hear it personally. I cannot ask her to withdraw something which I have not heard personally.

• (1620)

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): I will have the opportunity to check the "blues" or the videotapes to

see what the Minister had to say. We will reserve the right on that for tomorrow. I would say that for all the lament we have raised, there are still some very important and positive things that have come out of this debate. It has been an important experience for the Liberals as a Party. I have been proud to be in this Party with the leadership of the Hon. Leader of the Opposition and the way he conducted himself during the campaign in providing leadership to all Canadians.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): That is a sign for the future. That is no temporary circumstance. The election was a rare, unique, and difficult experience. The Party was able to define clearly some very important standards and objectives for itself. We were able to understand very clearly the threat we raised and some of the new contours of this society of ours. We were able to see the visible, naked exercise of power in a way that we have not seen before.

The communications industry and the media in this country have become very concentrated. Virtually all the newspapers in the country are being run by four or five large corporate empires whose owners supported free trade. The fact that their newspapers did so may not be entirely coincidental.

That should be a sign of some danger. As a Liberal Party, we felt the wrath of that kind of corporate concentration. We understand what kind of danger it poses, not just for our Party but for all future political Parties. It puts a brand new element of power in our society that seems not to have any accountability, control or sense of responsibility. There is no law that says how it can be used.

We saw the enormous weight of that power in terms of being able to spend millions of dollars of advertising without being responsible to anybody. The tax system of Canada encourages that to happen. They can write it off. The taxpayers of Canada help pay for it. It has become so concentrated. It is in the control of such a small group of people. That is one of the new contours and new characteristics of our country that we as Liberals, who have always fought for the dispersal, accountability, and responsibility of power, will have to face in the future. We will have to take a look at the laws of competition, elections, and other areas to make sure there is a measure of accountability.

Mr. McDermid: I saw Mel Hurtig's ads. I saw Maud Barlow's ads. Good old Maudie.