

*Supply*

would also like, for the benefit of my hon. colleagues across the way, to outline some of the anticipated benefits that would flow from a successful conclusion of a NAFTA agreement.

I also want to show, with respect to this last point in particular, how a successful conclusion of the NAFTA will result in a positive contribution to the ability of Mexico and its brave peoples to fully launch itself on the road to economic prosperity and the democratic development that they so much desire.

In the last 40 years, international trade and economic environment has evolved to the point where the isolationist and mercantilist policies of old have been discredited, as we all know. We are in a global economy. Governments, and indeed entire political systems, have come to the realization that it makes no more sense to throw up barriers between countries than it is to throw up barriers between parts of a single city or a county. We have seen what gifts history has brought to those countries that have put up barriers around them, and we all know too well what has happened to their economies.

Global interdependence makes each of us dependent upon each other now. It is a structure that most fully rewards the competitive advantages of nations. We have seen in decades past what happens in a world where economic security will lead to political and military insecurity.

The North American free trade negotiation is but one element of the government's over-all trade and competitiveness strategy, which is designed to ensure the future prosperity for Canada and all Canadians. That strategy also includes action plans designed to deal with the complex issues being discussed in the Uruguay round of the multilateral trade negotiations of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Both were preceded by the successful negotiation of the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement, which has given Canada increased access, as I especially noted earlier, to the companies in my constituency. It has given them more access and lower tariffs and more competitive advantage in the U.S. marketplace.

The proposition that Canada is part of the global economic reality seems to be one that is denied by certain members from across the aisle, and it certainly is

denied by the motion we have before us today. We on this side of the aisle understand that Canada has succeeded in building a modern post-industrial society, where fully a third of our economic prosperity depends on international trade.

My hon. colleagues would be surprised, undoubtedly, to learn that Canadian exports account for over three million jobs in Canada today. With so many jobs on the line, it is certainly sad, indeed, that we are debating a motion that would, if enacted, result in Canada giving up our preferred access to the U.S. market and to turn away from negotiations with one of the most dynamic economies to emerge in all of Latin America.

However, simply being in the game is clearly not enough. The government and the private sector, including the labour movement, must all work together to ensure that Canadian workers are given the tools necessary to win in this competitive situation we are in. For that we must equip ourselves so that we can play and beat the best in the global arena we are all in.

The government understands that to win, Canada must improve the competitive position of individual business enterprises as much as we must improve our competitive position as a nation. My colleague, the Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, has launched a competitive investigation, a competitive consultation across the country so that we can look at the five main areas of concentration of competitiveness.

The government understands that learning and education must be a lifelong commitment that serves not only to enrich our lives individually, but also a commodity that ensures the ability of Canadians to respond to future economic challenges and secure long-term, high wage jobs.

Canadian companies need to be given the flexibility so they can successfully adapt to changing market signals. On the production side they must become adept at translating international scientific research and technology into products that can be sold in markets secured by trade agreements.

We need to ensure that innovative Canadian companies have access to equally innovative financial and investment tools and strategies that are needed to