

Supply

• (1310)

The tabloid asked us to consider the growth statistics from 1981 to 1991. Furniture was up by 28 per cent, textiles were up by 89 per cent and plastics were up by 16 per cent. What it did not tell us was that in the textile sector almost 22 per cent of the jobs had been lost; an increase in unemployment in that sector of almost 13,000 jobs. The plastic sector had a loss of 22,000 jobs. What it did not tell us also was that there had been a drop of 11 per cent in production in the auto parts industry. In addition to the 30,000 jobs lost in the machinery producing industry, there had been a drop of 20 per cent in production.

The pamphlet also pointed out, and it was well worth remembering, that every billion dollars worth of exports creates 15,000 jobs. In the period between 1989 to 1991 it said Canadian exports grew by almost 11 per cent. It is talking dollars, but what it did not tell us is that if we take into account inflation and a change in the value of the Canadian dollar, our exports increased not by 11 per cent, but increased only two-thirds of 1 per cent. At the same time and under the same criteria the imports into the United States from Canada increased by 2.9 per cent.

It is important that one defines the terms in which one is speaking. Inflation and the value of the Canadian dollar made all the difference and the amount of increase was simply insignificant.

There is not going to be time to talk about the devastation the government has caused through changes to UI. It is obvious that whether we are talking in terms of the Liberals or the Conservatives, the devastation to the nation has been the same and both have contributed to it, perhaps not equally, but they certainly share the responsibility for having taken Canada into the depths it is in.

I was interested the other day when the member for South Shore was berating the critics of the North American free trade agreement. He said that we had to stop hiding behind this high wage wall. I do not think we have to stop criticizing the free trade agreement. We have to criticize it as strongly as we can for the simple reason that it is not a matter of Canada hiding behind a high wage wall. If we look at our competitors, those who

I think can be genuinely called our competitors, or most of the European countries, they have significantly higher wage rates than we do, even with the United States dollar being the standard against which we measure them.

Many of our competitors have higher wage rates than we do. It is unconscionable for someone in the government to say that we have to stop hiding behind high wage rates, implying that what we are supposedly as Canadians willing to do is take lower wages. I cannot imagine for what reason.

I see my time has expired, Mr. Speaker. I assumed there was going to be enough time to address all the issues. I thank the House for the time that I have had.

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Science and Technology and Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond briefly and ask a question of my hon. friend.

I am flabbergasted. In the last two years we have had more snow in the maritimes than we have had for 20 years. I cannot believe my hon. friend did not blame that on the free trade agreement too because it seems he has blamed everything else on it.

• (1315)

It is interesting. He says that increases in unemployment have occurred since the free trade agreement came in. Timing-wise he is right. We, along with the rest of the world, have been through a major recession. If there are no barriers around Canada then my hon. friend is not seeing through the invisible whatever is there.

Interesting. Let me just read him a quote or two. I know he will not take my word for it because for some reason he is a bit suspicious of what I might say. Listen to this one. "Far from creating the recession the FTA has softened its effect. The recession has been global and coincided with a fundamental restructuring of the world's economy. Critics too often attribute the effects of both recession and restructuring to the demon FTA, when without the FTA and those increased exports Canada's recession would have only been far worse and restructuring more difficult".

What lofty source do we have here? Would you believe it is *The Toronto Star*? That is what *The Toronto Star* said.