

Supply

I will explain to those who may not know it that the Auto Pact, which was signed in 1965, is essentially a bilateral free trade agreement involving cars and trucks.

The most unrelenting Auto Pact critics have become, with the passage of time and because of the results obtained, its fiercest champions. It is a fact that, because of our competitive costs, the number of cars built in Canada greatly exceeds the minimum quotas provided for under the Pact. With the Free Trade Agreement, these protection clauses will remain intact. As a matter of fact, the Auto Pact will be further improved and completed with the October 3 agreement, especially through the elimination of tariffs on spare parts and tires, previously excluded from our agreements with the United States.

As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, the climate now is very favourable to investments in Canada and our costs are very competitive. I have every reason to believe, therefore, that Asian car manufacturers, for whom the access to the North American market is vital, will gracefully accept the terms of the agreement which will more or less directly affect their operations both in Canada and in the United States.

Within the wider context of the regulations contained in the Free Trade Agreement, I have the very steadfast conviction that the automotive industry, both in Canada and the United States, will help improve the well-being of workers and consumers alike.

• (1720)

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I would simply like to emphasize the fact that the setting-up of a special bi-national panel designed to solve trade disputes and the commitment by both parties to negotiate new trade legislation over the next five years will enable Canadian and American investors and business people to work in an environment that will be more in tune with the realities of today's world.

The free-trade agreement has nothing to inspire those people who fret at the mere idea that a change might affect their daily routine. I am sorry that my colleagues from the Opposition do fall in that group of passive people who would rather suffer from undue constraints than face up to the reality and do what is needed to get out of it.

This time, the moment has come for Canadians to listen not just to their hearts, but also to their reason and their intelligence. The free-trade agreement will bring dividends to those who will take the trouble to roll up their sleeves, meet the challenge, and use the boundless opportunities available to them on the American markets. We will have to be strong, we will have to have determination and use the free-trade Agreement as a springboard to other markets, as a springboard into the upcoming century.

Mr. Speaker, this is a wonderful opportunity to bequeath to our children and grandchildren a better world economically, socially, and culturally.

Mr. Speaker, in our mind, this is a cornerstone of our program of national reconciliation, economic renewal and international relations.

[English]

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the gesture to give me a chance to put the position of our Party yet again, perhaps, in a slightly different way from what our Leader did in his comments earlier.

I think that the Minister of Regional and Industrial Expansion (Mr. de Cotret) has, as his colleagues have, talked a great deal about the lack of confidence of the Opposition. He is quite right. There is a tremendous lack of confidence which we feel. It is a lack of confidence in this Government and this Government's activities over the past three years in what we expect that it will bring to us with this one-sided deal which has been presented to the Canadian people. I have no apology for this lack of confidence. Nor do I think that most people in the country find anything that contradicts their feelings about this Government in that lack of confidence.

I want to do three things in the time that we have left in this debate. First, I want to give a general assessment of this pact which, in its 36 pages, threatens to do more damage to the people of Canada and to communities right across the country than has any other treaty that this country has ever entered into. It is a pact which has details within it that, frankly, I cannot believe that a sovereign Canadian Government would have been prepared to sign. It contains details that leave me with the sense that we have a deal here which has been developed by this Government, given to the people of this country, and hidden throughout the process of negotiation. This is a deal which, first, is unfair. Second, it is a deal which has in its explanations a great deal of untruths. Third, it is a deal which is tremendously destructive to the people of the country and to the communities in which we live.

• (1730)

There are so many parts to this deal to which one could refer which indicate this so clearly. We could talk about the jobs which will clearly be lost as part of this free trade agreement. For instance, we could talk about the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Bouchard) and his own statements recorded on tape that up to 500,000 jobs will be lost. He was never prepared to confirm those comments in the House, but he was prepared to go outside the House and reconfirm that up to 500,000 jobs could be lost.

We could talk about the tremendous threat to women because of the manner in which the service industries, for the first time in any trade agreement, have been completely liberalized. Of course, services employ approximately 83 per cent of the women in this country. I am convinced that the competition which will come in that service sector will destroy small scale businesses throughout the country which employ large numbers of those women.