

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

same assortment of inappropriate, unnecessary and even frivolous amendments. They were not made in an attempt to improve the legislation, but rather to score political points.

Recognizing that there were amendments tabled in committee that would be buried in the obscurity that they so richly deserve, my hon. friends opposite chose not to move many of them in that forum but instead sought to inflict them upon this House. Of course, the difference between committee and this House is that they have television, so they can play to the crowds.

You will have noticed that what has been taken here is a destructive—not a constructive—approach. The Liberal Party, for example, has proposed a number of amendments that would simply delete large chunks of the legislation—without proposing substitute language—thus rendering it a meaningless patchwork. They have repeated the same baseless and tired old arguments about the alleged impact of the free trade agreement on native land claims, the environment, social programs and so on. Why do they not propose an amendment saying that nothing in this Act shall affect the flow of air between Canada and the United States? That would make about as much sense as most of the amendments that we have before us today.

I find it sad—but not surprising—that the best that my friends opposite could come up with in this package of obstructionist, irrelevant and even silly amendments has been ruled out of order in large numbers. I am looking forward to debating these amendments on the floor of the House of Commons, because I believe that we can conclusively show why these amendments should be defeated.

The first group of amendments that you have put together, Nos. 1, 65 and 66, was debated at some length on Friday afternoon by the two opposition Parties. They went on and on and waxed eloquently all afternoon about why the boundaries of Canada are not under the interpretation of the Act. We heard great claims that the Government has forgotten Canada and that we do not care about Canada. Then we had my colleague, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) stand up. Let me quote what he said in the House of Commons. I think that this shows the type of misleading information that is presented to the House of Commons. At page 18276 of *Hansard* he said:

We spoke to officials of the trade negotiating office which put the Bill together. They said: "Everyone knows what Canada is anyway".

An Hon. Member: That is right. That is what they said.

Mr. McDermid: That is a total untruth. That is factually incorrect. Totally.

Mr. Axworthy: A point of order, Mr. Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry on a point of order.

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member has just said that he is calling me a liar, and he knows that it is against the rules of the House. If he wants to get the evidence, we are prepared to call the official whom we spoke to and who in fact made that kind of utterance.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I do not believe the Hon. Member said that. I think that he said there were some untruths, but I may be wrong. I was trying to read the free trade Bill and if the Hon. Member has said it, I know that he will retract the statement.

Mr. Axworthy: We will call the official. We have his name. We will call him in front of the committee.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I would like the Hon. Member—I cannot very well address the Hon. Member if he is not going to allow me to address him.

Mr. Axworthy: I am listening.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary has the floor.

Mr. McDermid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I did not accuse him. I said that the statement was wrong. I have read the statement and have said that the statement was wrong.

Mr. Axworthy: You said that it was untrue.

Mr. McDermid: Now, if he feels, by inference, that I am calling him a liar, I did not say that at all. I said that that statement was incorrect. I will tell you why it is incorrect.

Mr. Axworthy: A point of order, Mr. Speaker. It is part of the rules of the House.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On a point of order, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry.

Mr. Axworthy: The Member for Brampton has said that what we have said in the speech was untrue. Now he is changing his tune. If he wants to challenge it, that is fine. But he said it was untrue, and now he is changing his tune. I think that that is against the rules of the House.

Mr. Andre: He can say it is untrue.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I will decide whether the person should withdraw or not. The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary has the floor.

Mr. McDermid: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. If I may proceed, the statement is untrue. I have checked with the officials of the TNO, and none of them have claimed to say that. Had the Hon. Member called TNO and asked their opinion on that particular thing, he would have got these facts.

Mr. Axworthy: We did call him.