

Government Orders

(6) each proceeding before the panel or the Appellate Body that was initiated during the fiscal year regarding Federal or State law, the status of the proceeding, and the matter at issue;

(7) the status of consultations with any State whose law was the subject of a report adverse to the United States and was issued by a panel or the Appellate Body; and,

(8) any progress achieved in increasing the transparency of proceedings of the Ministerial Conference and the General Council, and of dispute settlement proceedings conducted pursuant to the Dispute Settlement Understanding.

Sound familiar? The Canadian bill, C-57, contains no such provision. We are asking today that Canada ensure that we have a report on the activities of the WTO in front of us just as the Americans will have by legislative authority. It is the only fair and equitable way to deal with this international crisis confronting us in trade.

I would, even if the Americans had not put this legislation in front of them asking for an annual report, be asking that the Canadian people and the Canadian Parliament receive no less. We are entering into an agreement on a world stage. We then just allow that agreement to carry on without any kind of responsive action to the people of Canada and to this Parliament. It would be most unfortunate if we allowed it to happen.

Let us ensure that we the Canadian people, producers, and parliamentarians have an understanding every year of what is happening on our behalf in the global marketplace and that we are with that information able to respond in appropriate manner.

Mr. John Solomon (Regina—Lumsden, NDP): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise in the House this afternoon in support of this motion put forward by my New Democratic Party colleague, the member for The Battlefords—Meadow Lake.

All we are asking in this motion is that the government be responsible, accountable, fair, and to introduce equity with respect to these international trade agreements. Accountability is very important to the people of this country. The government was elected on the basis of trust, on the basis that it would stand up for Canadians in Canada and stand up for Canada outside Canada.

What we see here is a government that is not being fully accountable in Bill C-57. That is why we are moving this motion to ensure there is an accountability process so the government can review this particular bill and this particular trade agreement, the WTO, and report back to us in a regular and a timely fashion.

• (1310)

It is a natural course of doing business. As a business person, you never undertake a business plan, or in this case a government plan, without having some mechanism from which you can assess whether the program is working or not, or whether your business plan is functioning properly and working well. There has to be a regular review process. All we are asking is for the government to be accountable to the people of Canada and to the

businesses of Canada by undertaking a regular review and reporting back to Parliament; nothing more, nothing less.

The government has the responsibility to the Canadian people to be accountable for the actions it takes and to be accountable for the treaties it enters into with other countries. It has to be responsible in its actions. All we are asking is for the government to take responsibility and to account for its actions on a regular basis.

We are asking for fairness, the third point in my remarks. We are asking the government to treat its own people in a fair way. Some people may debate whether the Americans in their legislation are being fair internationally, and we believe that they are not, but they are being very fair to the people that they govern. They are being fair because they are saying if an international agreement is unfair to their working people, their industries, or their manufacturing sector, they will implement and take action to protect their people.

Some people may view this as protectionism. Some people say why should we as Canadians play the same game? It is a mugs' game when you start putting a defence of one sector over another or defending one situation with respect to international agreements when other countries are not doing that. It starts bidding up or bidding down the intricacies and the processes that are involved that have made this agreement work in the first place.

The government has to be fair to its own country, its own persons and its own industries and producers and manufacturers, by saying that in the event there is unfairness to Canadians, the government will have legislation which will protect the interests of Canadians to make it fair.

With respect to equity, we need an amendment in Bill C-57 which is equitable for everybody. We cannot insist on other countries doing what we are doing, but with respect to these amendments, we can inject some equity into the system.

I end my remarks by responding to a comment that was made by a Reform member a few moments ago. He talked about how this Bill C-57, without amendment, would ensure that we have a free trade agreement. I have a book here written by John Ralston Saul called *The Doubter's Companion*. It is a dictionary of aggressive common sense. It defines the word free as the most over used term in modern politics, evoked by everyone to mean anything.

Samuel Johnson once spoke of patriotism as the last refuge of scoundrels. Evocations of what is free and of freedom have now overtaken patriotism. This has led to a limitless series of oxymorons which have somehow become respectable: Free air miles, free trade, the twinning of free men and free markets when history demonstrates clearly that free markets do best under sophisticated dictatorships and chafe under limitations imposed by democracy. Another oxymoron with respect to the