

The role of exporting in this country has always been an extremely important one from the earliest days of economic activity when we exported fish to Europe, to the days when we increased our exports to include timber, later wheat, and now a wide range of commodities and manufactured goods and services. The role that Export Development Corporation has to play can be a very important one. We need it to continue the trading relationship with our neighbours to the south that has existed for a couple of centuries. We need it for expanding our trading operations in the rest of the world.

As a representative of a region that exports virtually all its production and can rely very little on the domestic market to consume the grains, oilseeds and meats we produce, I want to say a few things about the fixation the government has had for most of its mandate, both the previous one and the current one, with trade with the United States as a means of increasing economic activity. When we look at it from the experience of having been four years into that relationship we see that perhaps it was not the great thing the government likes to tell us it was.

• (1600)

I am using as my source Statistics Canada and I am looking at the trade balances that existed for four years prior to the implementation of the Canada-U.S. trade deal. I am comparing that with the average of the four years that have occurred after the signing of the Canada-U.S. trade arrangement. I see that 1988 was the last year we had a positive trade balance between our two countries. If we take the four-year average before the deal we had a positive net balance in goods of plus \$17.3 billion. We had a negative trade balance in services of minus \$12.4 billion, leaving us a total on average of \$4.8 billion before the free trade agreement.

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THE ROYAL ASSENT

Madam Deputy Speaker: Order. I have the honour to inform the House that a communication has been received as follows:

Mr. Speaker,

I have the honour to inform you that the Honourable Peter de C. Cory, Puisne Judge of the Supreme Court of Canada, in his capacity as Deputy Governor General, will proceed to the Senate Chamber today, the 25th day of March, 1993, at 4:00 p.m., for the purpose of giving Royal Assent to certain bills.

Government Orders

Yours sincerely,

Judith A. LaRocque
Secretary to the Governor General

• (1605)

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Madam Speaker, the Deputy to his Excellency the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

• (1610)

[Translation]

And being returned:

Madam Deputy Speaker: I have the honour to inform the House that when the House went up to the Senate Chamber, the Deputy to His Excellency the Governor General was pleased to give, in Her Majesty's name, the royal assent to the following bills:

Bill C-111, an act prohibiting the sale of tobacco products to persons under the age of eighteen—Chapter 5.

Bill C-99, an act to amend the Small Businesses Loans Act and another Act in consequence thereof—Chapter 6.

Bill C-69, an act to amend the Criminal Code (air and maritime safety)—Chapter 7.

Bill C-79, an act to amend the Divorce Act and the Family Orders and Agreements Enforcement Assistance Act—Chapter 8.

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[English]

EXPORT DEVELOPMENT ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre) that Bill C-118, an act to amend the Export Development Act, be read the second time and referred to a legislative committee in the Economics envelope.

Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie): Mr. Speaker, before we had the call from the Governor General and the trip to the Senate, I was pointing out that the increase in trade to the United States, which has been the basis of government policy over the last two terms, has not proved to be as propitious for Canada as originally thought or at least as you would glean from the government's presentation of the statistics.