

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

I stand and speak on behalf of those people from Eglinton—Lawrence who are now in the midst of their Christmas season. Others have just finished the Hanukkah season. To all of them I wish them the best for the season and for a happy new year as well. I wish you, Mr. Chairman, and all my colleagues in this place the same. For all of them, I am here with my Party to move amendments that will ensure that their interests and vision of Canada that is continually evolving are protected. We must move amendments because the negotiation process is faulty. The context is faulty. We need to be able to produce a different type of environment if we are going to go through with this deal.

Let us take a look at what happened. It is not that long ago that the Prime Minister, the Trade Minister, the Finance Minister, and several other members of the Cabinet indicated that this Free Trade Agreement, as they called it, would be an anathema to Canada, to the Canadian vision, economy and society as we knew it a mere three years ago and as we still recognize it today.

What happened? Over the course of a few years we found that former and current Governments dismantled immediately some of the basic pillars of our Canadian economy. First, they removed the restraints on investment, removed FIRA, and removed the controls on foreign investment in Canada. Second, we saw the removal of the pillars that we had seen as the strength of Canada in the National Energy Program. We opened up our capital markets to foreign investors without due regard, without putting any constraints on them to consider the needs of Canada, our historical dimensions, and the special considerations of the way we have evolved socially and culturally.

● (2200)

What happens when we remove the levers we had at our disposal in negotiation? We end up negotiating in the supine position. It is no irony. It is no coincidence that the major negotiator in those talks, Mr. Simon Reisman, indicated that a deal could not be struck on the basis of commitments that the Prime Minister had made to various Premiers of the provinces, including the Premier of the Province of Ontario.

Some of those guarantees for protection of our agriculture, which some of my colleagues have expressed in a most eloquent and very definitive manner, are at a disadvantage by virtue of our climate and by virtue of our own geographic and geophysical terrain. Second, there would be guarantees with respect to protection of our investment market and our capital market. There

would be guarantees for the maintenance of social programs. Canadians have fought hard over the course of the last decade to maintain social programs that have become the envy of modern societies throughout the western world and have served as models for the emerging societies of the eastern world.

We saw some of the guarantees that the Prime Minister gave to our Premiers. I refer to the guarantees for the Auto Pact in my province and the dynamics that they produced for a particular sector of the country which we wish could be distributed throughout the rest of the country. We were given guarantees that we would have access into the American market and that there would be protection from unfair competition from the United States. We saw guarantees given for a binding dispute settlement mechanism. We saw guarantees given to the provinces that there would not be any compromise on energy.

All of those were poor guarantees. They were not worth much. They were given in a free spirit. They were given very eloquently. They appear to have been given very trustingly and very vociferously, but it proved in the end to be worth nothing more than the warm words that they indicated. We see that this trade agreement lacks all of those. It is no coincidence that we see a major province like Ontario indicate that the Free Trade Agreement is not in the interests of our province, and we dare say, not for the rest of Canada.

Let us take a look for a moment at the kind of access that has been provided for us under this particular deal. Let us look at the reasons why we will have to move amendments, why it is incumbent upon us as the party which represents those people who have interests in the development of the economy and in maintaining the social and cultural dynamics therein, to move the kinds of amendments that we will move. First of all, we do not have guaranteed access. Nowhere in the deal is there an indication that we have guaranteed access to an American market. When we hear the great words about a very large market-place for our goods, we ask ourselves, where does it say we move in? Where does it say that that market is open to us and not to anybody else? We keep in mind that this is a nation of people who have built greatness on adversity, who have been unafraid of challenges. It has been people who have taken the bull by the horns and have done what they needed to do to create success where none could be seen.

Where is this great opportunity? Is it with the great buyers in the United States? I refer to the federal, state