

*Extension of Sittings*

Yet, they changed their mind a few days later and said: "No, no, we will do all we can to prevent you from passing this legislation". And they are going to do that even though the Canadian population thinks otherwise. Madam Speaker, is that not an attack on democracy which proves once again how hypocritical the Liberal Party has always been? I think it is. Democracy spoke, and you said that you would listen. I am not all that surprised. When has the Liberal Party kept its word? Never. I would have been very surprised if it had done so this time. During the election campaign, our slogan was "Let us continue in the right direction". I am sure that we will continue and that the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States will be implemented as planned, in spite of all.

As you know, Madam Speaker, I was born in Europe and I had the chance to live in almost all European countries. Some years ago, 10 to 15 at the most, many European countries were importing grains and produce from Canada, United States and other countries. But at one point, they woke up; faster than the Liberals and the NDP. They understood that they had to get together, to open their frontiers to each other if they wanted to develop their trade and production. So, they created what is now called the Common Market, some kind of free trade zone made up of France, Germany and England at first, and finally, Portugal. All those countries which were once importing and poor countries have become self-sufficient one after the other. Later, they became exporting countries. Today, they are our competitors. How strange that countries which have been importing goods for decades, countries on the verge of under-development, have been able all of a sudden, and thanks to the EEC, to become self-sufficient and then to start exporting their products. Not to mention that they have become nowadays fierce competitors.

Is it not a clear signal that we should not be inward-looking? I know a country called Portugal. The only way it could open to the world was through Spain and France, two countries 10 times its size. Even so, Portugal should not fear losing its language or its culture, since, as we all know, it has not so far. The people of Portugal speak Portuguese as well as they did 20, and even 50 years ago. None of their cultural or social programs have been threatened, but they have found new wealth.

Portugal, which was not able previously to support even 50 per cent of its consumer needs, is now wealthy and more than self-supporting. It has become an exporting country.

Spain, just beside Portugal, was also an importing country for more than 50 years before joining the EEC. Spain has not lost its language, nor its culture, nor any of its social programs. The Spanish business community is not afraid of competition. Today, Spain still has one of the highest standard of living in Europe. You can imagine the turnaround they achieved! But some people in Quebec, Madam Speaker, say they are going to be swallowed up by the United States because it is such a big country. They are not yet convinced that they can compete with anybody.

We all know about Lavalin, Bombardier, Cascade Papers, the Lamarres. All those people have shown their mettle throughout the world. They are not afraid of free trade. They know what is going on in the world. They know that to get on in life, you have to open up then work, you have to have confidence in yourself. And there are many others like them, the caisses populaires, for instance, which, 50 years ago, were doing business from church basements and, having started from nothing, have today become a huge economic force. Is that not a proof that Quebeckers and Canadians are quite capable of competing with anybody? They have proved it in the past. They will continue doing so.

To withdraw from the world, Madame Speaker, is to diminish oneself. To stop is to move backward. Since, as a country, we must open up to the world, to the future, to prosperity, we cannot withdraw in a cocoon.

Economists will tell you that today a country needs at least 200 million potential consumers in order to assert and develop certain types of expertise, and certain manufacturing and marketing methods. Canada has a population of only 25 million. Although Canadians are productive, although they are clever, they cannot, with a market like ours, a very small market, compete with giants with potential markets of 200, 300 and 400 million consumers. Our Government has understood that. It has understood that, in order to really develop ourselves, we need a much greater market than the one we have now. Some say that we must gain access to the markets of Europe, of Asia, of other continents.

I have nothing against that. I quite agree. We should not limit ourselves. The farther we can go the better it is going to be for Canadians. But let us begin at the beginning, let us begin by what is closest, by our friend. First, Madam Speaker, let us begin by keeping what we already have and putting it in a more secure place. As you would know, American protectionism has been more evident in recent years, particularly last year, and there