



CANADA

# House of Commons Debates

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OFFICIAL REPORT  
(HANSARD)

**Thursday, February 15, 2001**

**Speaker: The Honourable Peter Milliken**

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# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, February 15, 2001

The House met at 10 a.m.

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*Prayers*

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• (1000)

[*English*]

## PRIVILEGE

HOUSE OF COMMONS

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this will only take a minute or so of the time of the House, and I apologize for taking up any time of the House.

I understand a question of privilege is the only device by which I can raise this issue. At page 388 of *Hansard* of Thursday, February 8, 2001, stated in English, and I made the speech in English:

As members of the government we are accountable to a Prime Minister who is personally accountable to the House and to Canadians generally.

In other words, ministers are accountable to a Prime Minister. Of course, that is the way it is constitutionally.

I would not have raised this issue other than the fact that members of the media have utilized the French text, which stated almost the opposite.

[*Translation*]

The French text reads:

En tant que députés, nous sommes responsables devant le premier ministre, qui est lui-même personnellement responsable devant la Chambre des communes et les Canadiens en général.

[*English*]

The French text stated that all members of the House are personally accountable to the Prime Minister. Although colleagues across the way would perhaps want to make a political point about it, it is factually inaccurate. It is not what was said. Unfortunately

this has led the media to utilize the French text as being that which I said when *Hansard* indicated that I was speaking in the English language at the time.

**The Speaker:** I think it is clear that the minister has raised a question of privilege which is in the nature of a grievance. I think he has made his point and we will leave the matter there.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

## CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I have the honour to lay upon the table the special report to parliament by the Canadian Human Rights Commission on wage parity.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[*Translation*]

## INTERPARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS

**Mr. Bernard Patry (Pierrefonds—Dollard, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to Standing Order 34, I have the honour to table in the House, in both official languages, the report of the Canadian section of the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie, and the financial report relating to it.

The report concerns the meeting of the assembly held in Caen, France, from December 13 to 15, 2000.

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## CANADA ELECTIONS ACT

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.)** moved to introduce Bill C-9, an act to amend the Canada Elections Act and the Electoral Boundaries Readjustment Act.

(Motions deemed adopted, bill read the first time and printed)

*Supply*

• (1005)

*[English]*

## COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

## PROCEDURE AND HOUSE AFFAIRS

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in accordance with the notice of two days ago, I move concurrence in the first report of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs dealing with membership of our standing committees.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

**Mr. Derek Lee:** Mr. Speaker, I am not certain that required unanimous consent, but we are delighted to have unanimity in the concurrence.

Also in relation to the membership of committees, and this will require consent, if the House gives its consent I move:

That, the following members be added to the list of associate members of the Standing Committee on Procedure and House Affairs:

Jim Abbott, James Lunney, Diane Ablonczy, Peter MacKay, Rob Anders, Preston Manning, David Anderson, Inky Mark, Roy Bailey, Keith Martin, Leon Benoit, Philip Mayfield, Michel Bellehumeur, Réal Ménard, Andy Burton, Val Meredith, Chuck Cadman, Rob Merrifield, Rick Casson, Bob Mills, Dave Chatters, James Moore, John Cummins, Lorne Nystrom, Madeleine Dalphond-Guiral, Deepak Obhrai, Stockwell Day, Brian Pallister, John Duncan, Jim Pankiw, Reed Elley, Charlie Penson, Ken Epp, Joe Peschisolido, Brian Fitzpatrick, James Rajotte, Paul Forseth, Scott Reid, Cheryl Gallant, Gerry Ritz, Peter Goldring, Caroline St-Hilaire, Jim Gouk, Werner Schmidt, Gurmant Grewal, Carol Skelton, Deborah Grey, Monte Solberg, Art Hanger, Kevin Sorenson, Dick Harris, Larry Spencer, Grant Hill, Darrel Stinson, Jay Hill, Myron Thompson, Howard Hilstrom, Vic Toews, Betty Hinton, Maurice Vellacott, Rahim Jaffer, Randy White, Dale Johnston, Ted White, Jason Kenney, John Williams, Gary Lunn, Lynne Yelich

I ask that this be adopted on consent.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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## QUESTIONS ON THE ORDER PAPER

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I ask that all questions be allowed to stand.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is that agreed?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

*[Translation]*

## SUPPLY

## ALLOTTED DAY—FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ)** moved:

That this House demands that the government bring any draft agreement on the Free Trade Zone of the Americas before the House so that it may be debated and put to a vote before ratification by the Government of Canada.

**Mr. Michel Guimond:** Mr. Speaker, I just want to indicate that throughout the day, until the end of this debate tonight, the members of the Bloc Québécois will be splitting their time and keeping their speeches to 10 minutes.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** We will do that.

**Mr. Pierre Paquette:** Mr. Speaker, first, I want to pay tribute to André d'Allemagne who was not only a friend, but a colleague of mine. We both taught at the Collège Maisonneuve for over eight years.

He recently passed away at the age of 71. He was a pioneer of the sovereignty movement and an educator, not only in his capacity as a teacher but also at the political level. Quebec has lost a first class citizen to whom I wanted to pay tribute today.

• (1010)

This being my maiden speech in the House, I would also like to thank the people of the riding of Joliette for the trust they put in me last November 27. I can assure them today, as I did during the election campaign, that I will defend the interests of Quebec and of my fellow citizens of Joliette.

Introducing this motion today offers me the first opportunity to ensure that their interests are defended. The motion reads as follows:

That this House demand that the government bring any draft agreement on the Free Trade Zone of the Americas before the House so that it may be debated and put to a vote before ratification by the Government of Canada.

From April 20 to 22, the 34 heads of state and of government of the Americas, with the exception of Cuba, will be holding the third Summit of the Americas in Quebec City. This will be an extremely important event as far as the process of creating a free trade area of

the Americas is concerned. The related agreement is slated for around 2005. Creation of a free trade area of the Americas is both an extraordinary challenge for all the states and peoples of the Americas and an extraordinary opportunity. It can, however, involve considerable risk.

Creation of a free trade area is far from being a guarantee, a cure-all, for all our woes, whether economic or social. This we have seen, moreover, with the creation of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the NAFTA area encompassing Canada, Quebec, the United States and Mexico. For example, its creation did not prevent the crisis of the peso and the widening of the social gap. In our societies—and this applies to Canada, the United States and Mexico—more and more people are living not only in poverty but in abject poverty. We must therefore be extremely vigilant in negotiating or creating these free trade areas, while still remaining open to the process.

This process must be the result of democratic debate. That is why the Bloc Québécois, through me, is today introducing this motion, because we have concerns. We are concerned for Quebec's rights first, because obviously it is always troubling to see the federal government negotiate on behalf of Quebecers on the economic, social and cultural front. But we are also concerned for all Canadians and Quebecers as far as respect of social and environmental rights is concerned.

In the past our governments, and this is true for the federal government, but also for the U.S. and Mexican governments, were not vigilant or, I would say, were not overly concerned about the social, environmental, political and cultural consequences of these trade agreements.

As an unionist, I was able to follow these debates from the start, in the mid-eighties. I recall very well that in 1989—and the federal Liberals were by the way in agreement with us on that—we were not taking into account the fact that the negotiation of free trade agreements with the United States was going to have social and environmental implications. We can now see that. For example, Bill C-2 on employment insurance is a direct consequence, and this is not the only reason, of the free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico. We now know that our employment insurance plan reflects more or less what exists in most of the states in the U.S.

In 1989, during the negotiation of the free trade agreement with the United States, we did not want to recognize that there were social, environmental and cultural implications. In 1994, because of public pressure in Canada, Quebec, the United States and Mexico, governments were forced to adopt, at the same time as the North American Free Trade Agreement, side accords on environmental and labour standards. These accords were signed because of public pressure and pressure from parliamentarians, particularly in the United States.

Recently, in 2001, the Prime Minister made a speech in which he alluded to the possibility of introducing social clauses in the agreement. This is a step in the right direction, in my opinion.

### *Supply*

However, we must not give up. The public and parliamentarians must continue to exert pressure to ensure that the free trade agreement of the Americas will include clauses that protect our social and environmental rights and also Quebec's interests.

• (1015)

Canada and Quebec have open economies. We have a vested interest in trade liberalization. These agreements are also extraordinary opportunities for co-operation with countries from the south and even within our societies. However, this integration of the economies and of the markets must be controlled by introducing social clauses, particularly to protect labour rights.

Let us be clear. When we talk about protecting labour rights, we are not talking about standards. We are talking about fundamental rights that are recognized by the International Labour Organization, rights such as the banning of child labour, forced labour and discrimination, and the recognition of the freedom of association and of the right to collective bargaining.

How will each country in the Americas implement these rights? It will be up to them, based on their respective histories and cultures. I often give the example—and I will do it again here in the House—that in Canada, the United States and Quebec we recognize the freedom of association through very specific forms of union certification. In Mexico and in Latin American countries, this may be done in a different way. It is also done differently in Europe. The important thing is for governments to pledge to respect those fundamental rights in the way that will better suit these societies.

Likewise, the approach that we favour is not a punitive one. In this respect, Latin-American countries need not fear the emergence of a new form of social protectionism. It is rather by co-operation that we want to help those countries, as well as our own North-American countries, respect those rights. Let us not forget that we are in no position to lecture anyone. We sometimes have things to learn from others.

It is therefore a co-operative approach that we favour, not one of sanctions. The same applies for the environment. We have to ensure that the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas will clearly indicate the common desire of all the populations of the Americas to promote a sound and sustainable environment.

To that end, civil societies and parliamentarians have to play an active role in the negotiation process. The texts on which negotiations are based should be made available so that Quebecers and Canadians, as well as the members of the House, will be able to evaluate the validity and accuracy of the Canadian government's positions regarding what is being done in the free trade area of the Americas negotiation process.

It seems to me that we should have learned from what happened with the multilateral agreement on investment that was secretly negotiated for two years at the OECD. Sooner or later the basic texts will be made public. A citizen group is sure to release them.

*Supply*

This will give rise to a negative reaction against the whole process, even though the process could have been well defined.

Transparency is therefore very important. So there is reason for concern, particularly with statements like the one made by the Minister for International Trade in the House on February 1.

As for the negotiating documents, obviously there are 34 parties to it. It is not up to Canada to share it if other countries do not want to share it. Canada would support sharing it at this stage. However our partners do not wish that. We will respect them.

We are extremely concerned that, even though we are only at the negotiating stage, already the Canadian government is not assuming a leadership role with respect to this minimum requirement of transparency. As for contradictory statements, we could add this one by Mr. Lortie, the Prime Minister's personal representative throughout the preparations for the Summit of the Americas: "Too much transparency would be chaotic at this stage in the preparations".

Is it possible to be too transparent? Is it possible to be too democratic? I do not think so. Parliamentarians must be able to debate these issues. That is why the Bloc Québécois tabled this motion. We must ensure that the free trade area of the Americas agreement is discussed in the House. I urge the members of all political parties to ensure that we have some way of being able to evaluate the negotiations that will take place.

Recently, Mr. Chrétien stated—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I remind members that they are not to refer to members, ministers or the Prime Minister by name in the House.

**Mr. Pierre Paquette:** I apologize, this is due to my inexperience.

Canada believes that it is through openness and transparency that we will convince the public of the legitimacy of the agreement. As host of the first Summit of the Americas in this millennium, Canada will do everything in its power to promote openness and transparency. It is time to put our money where our mouth is and pass the motion I have introduced.

• (1020)

[*English*]

**Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk—Brant, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to comment on a few of the issues. I know the hon. member is new and may not be aware of this, but the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade and a trade subcommittee on trade and trade disputes looked at the free trade area of the Americas in the last parliament.

We managed to consult Canadians all across the country to let them know the process and to be part of the process of this

transparency that the Canadian government has been pushing in these negotiations.

I question what he said about there not being transparency. The websites contain the Canadian documentation and position papers. All Canadians and groups who are interested can read the information or take it off the websites. There are a few left to do and they are still under negotiations and consultations.

I also point out to the hon. member that Canada's position was not made somewhere in the back halls of the bureaucracy. All the provinces, premiers and Canadians were consulted first before the government came forward with its position. Canadians, interest groups and the provinces were consulted and then Canada put together a package of consultations.

I do want to ask a question on the motion which demands that parliament first vote on this issue before ratification. As the hon. member knows, generally we will agree on the issues and then there will be a vote.

However that is the American system that the hon. member is putting forward. Right now the Americans have a fast track way in which to get around that because no government will come to an agreement on an issue where it can all of a sudden be changed at the last minute by one group. We cannot negotiate that way. Does the hon. member not agree that this is not the right way to go and that this would only stall negotiations?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette:** Mr. Speaker, since the beginning, the Bloc Québécois has been trying to initiate this debate on the free trade area of the Americas, but government members pretend they do not understand our questions or views.

We do not have a problem with the Canadian position, even though the texts to which we have access seem particularly generous but also vague on the specific contents of the negotiations.

What I said in my speech, and I repeat it, is that we are not able to assess the validity and appropriateness of the Canadian government's position if we do not have access to the basic texts on the issues that are being negotiated by the 34 governments at the nine sectoral tables.

In that sense, there is a lack of transparency. Quebecers and Canadians are suspicious of the process and, as long as the government does not do something about it, that process will be flawed. Every day, various public groups express their concerns.

Just today we were told that a people's summit would be held. This does not go only for Canada. The whole process must be reviewed and our country must be a leader in that exercise. The Prime Minister said so, and I think that we must put words into



action by making sure that this House plays an active role in the whole process.

We want to have access to the basic texts on which the negotiations will be based, so as to be able to assess Canada's position.

Second, and I am pleased that the hon. member mentioned it, parliamentarians in the United States have the privilege of debating the issue first and demanding a number of things before allowing the president to fast track the process. Democrat senators and representatives have made it clear to President Bush that there will be no fast tracking if the agreement does not include clauses on labour and the environment.

Unfortunately, we, in this House, do not have that possibility. If they have these guarantees, they will allow the American president to effectively use a fast track procedure, which will allow members of Congress to vote without amending the treaty, something which does not exist here in Canada.

So, I am asking for the equivalent of what exists in the U.S. Congress. In fact, any democracy should have these same rules.

• (1025)

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, this morning I am proud to speak to the motion put forward by the promising and bright new member for Joliette. I knew him in another life when we were both younger.

It is useless to hide from the fact that the population is worried about the effects of globalization. Now, the free trade area that is in preparation is one of the major components of this globalization process that is developing and going on.

We must not forget that the World Trade Organization negotiations failed and that in the end this free trade area of the Americas will be somewhat a first. For the first time in a free trade area there will be highly developed countries like the United States, the richest country in the world, as well as countries of Central America and the southern hemisphere of the Americas which are, in some cases, very poor.

It is normal that the populations of Quebec, Canada, the United States and the countries of Central and South America are worried. We are not the only ones asking for more transparency. I would say that as a whole the population feels that there are opportunities to be found in globalization, but they know that these could be opportunities only for the rich and multinationals.

To make sure that the riches that could result from globalization benefit the majority, we must look at what is being negotiated. It is obvious.

Keeping the process secret will not make the concerns disappear. We will not make the concerns go away by telling people: "Go see

### *Supply*

what is on the Internet. Our positions are known". We know the free trade area of the Americas is a negotiating process.

However, such a negotiation has been prepared for a long time by officials from all the countries. These officials most certainly have their opinion on the place where they think it should be held. We need more information to know where this place is, to ensure that this process, I say again, does not lead to some people getting richer and others getting poorer, and does not put pressure on social and labour conditions in general. Because globalization can be this process.

Incidentally, if the European Union is being built, it is because Europeans do not want the market to be concerned only with the economy. They also want to protect social rights and legitimate long fought gains made by workers. And this is done by paying attention, not by saying: "We will reduce everything to the lowest common denominator, we will say no to unionization by putting downward pressure on salaries and on working conditions for everyone in the future."

We know investments will be discussed and are being discussed. Is what is on the table what had been prepared at the OECD? France put a stop to the MAI, the Multilateral Agreement on Investment, which gave unacceptable powers to investors. What is being prepared on this? We need to know.

• (1030)

The issue of services will be on the table, but we do not know which services are going to be included. The United States is pushing hard. We have been talking for a while about the environment, and social rights, or the lack thereof. We have been discussing what rules on competition would be acceptable.

People need to know the content of the basic negotiating documents. We need and have the right to know, so that we can have a public debate over the issues, meet with groups from the southern hemisphere countries who will explain their restrictions. To do that, we need to know where we are heading. With the present process, we cannot know.

Why should the Government of Quebec and other provincial governments be involved? Because they will be very directly affected.

Is it good enough to say, as the secretary of state just did, that the government had consultations two years ago? No, because the discussions that have taken place in the meantime affect us. We want to know what is at stake, and we have the right to know. It is not a matter of negotiating in public, but of knowing what the issues are.

Parliament also needs to get ready to be able to make a decision on the agreement before it is ratified. Let me remind the House that when we signed the first free trade agreement, which was our first leap of faith, the present Prime Minister, who was then in the opposition, was incensed over this agreement. An election was

*Supply*

called on the issue. We had the text of the agreement then. We had the opportunity to examine it. Moreover, we all remember that the Prime Minister said he would not sign it unless important changes were made.

Will that party, which worked itself into a state over free trade at the time and then became its biggest supporter, tell us that consulting parliament is good for Americans, but not for Canadians?

I appeal to members sitting on both sides of the House. They must realize that, if FTA was a leap in the dark and NAFTA was put through without as much discussion, this one is quite another matter. With this, we are going global, we are entering a larger free trade zone with poor countries dealing with other constraints. It is crucial for us to know what is at stake in order to have the proper discussions and to be able to protect the people in the southern hemisphere, in South America and Central America, as well as here.

This is only the beginning of the debate I hope, but I am thankful that my party was the one to initiate it.

In conclusion, I move:

That the main motion be amended by adding after the words "demand that" the following:

" , in order to ensure openness,"

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** The amendment is in order.

• (1035)

[*English*]

**Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the remarks of the member for Mercier, whom I respect a great deal as an active member in the area of foreign affairs. I think, however, that she is misleading the House and the motion misleads the House, or at least the discussion so far is misleading.

There are two issues with which we have to concern ourselves. The first one is the issue to which she and the previous speaker referred, transparency in the negotiations. The House must bear in mind that there is not one text available. There are 42 texts. There are as many texts as there are governments sitting around the table. Many of the governments do not intend to share those texts until the negotiations are complete. That is the way international negotiations are completed.

Our government has been unlike any government before in history in terms of its open consultation, open discussion, and the availability of our negotiating positions on the Internet where they have been fixed. There is recognition that areas such as services and investment, to which the member referred, are not available, but they will be available when they are ready. There are open

discussions. Our committees are consulted and there is broad consultation.

The member's motion does not direct itself to the issue she has been discussing today. Her motion is in fact a constitutional amendment. The motion that the Bloc proposes today is that the House be required to debate an international agreement before it is ratified by the Government of Canada. This has never been the practice. It is not the practice of the country and it should not be introduced.

I suggest to the member that she respond to my question. Why would we introduce a profound constitutional change and an amendment in the way in which we proceed in international affairs under the guise of the transparency of this negotiation? We all agree on all the issues and that it is most important for all of us. We all intend to be engaged and have been engaged in a meaningful way.

[*Translation*]

**Ms. Francine Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, I am told that the word "misleading" used by my hon. colleague, a man I greatly respect, is apparently unparliamentary. It is your call, but I would like to respond.

**Mr. Bill Graham:** I withdraw my words. I used the word strictly in a straightforward manner.

**Ms. Francine Lalonde:** Mr. Speaker, I expected no less of the person who is again going to chair the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs.

I wish to respond to my colleague's two arguments. The first is that there is no such thing as the negotiating text to which we are referring. I regret to have to inform him that, should this be the case, people might as well be prepared for the free trade area of the Americas never to be created.

I might also state that I have seen the document prepared for the WTO negotiations. The state it was in just before they were to be held explains why an agreement was never forthcoming.

I think it would be misinforming this House to pretend that a process of seeking a consensus between the holders of the most extreme positions is not already under way. There is most certainly a basic text. That is one thing. There are most certainly clearly identified issues. That is the other thing.

• (1040)

I would want us to have access to that information. As well, in connection with my hon. colleague's constitutional argument that the Constitution would have to be changed to allow such a debate, I will investigate that in the Constitution. If that is the case, we would have to move rapidly.

How is it that Brian Mulroney submitted to the public for consultation and to parliament a free trade agreement that was later



ratified? Think of the dramatic change represented by the free trade area of the Americas. Something would have to be done. But we know that Canada is in a constitutional straitjacket which makes any change impossible.

\* \* \*

[English]

### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Following consultations with all parties in the House, I believe you would find consent to put and adopt the following motion. I move:

That at the conclusion of the present debate on today's Opposition Motion, all questions necessary to dispose of this motion be deemed put, a recorded division deemed requested and deferred to the expiry of the time provided for Government Orders on Tuesday, February 20, 2001.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is there unanimous consent for the hon. parliamentary secretary to move the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

\* \* \*

### SUPPLY

#### ALLOTTED DAY—FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I take this first opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment to the chair. I thank the people of my riding of London—Fanshawe. I also thank my wife, my children, and all my very dedicated campaign workers who have made my election for the third time to this place possible. I am deeply honoured and I thank them.

I am very pleased to address the House today on the very important issue raised by the opposition, the free trade area of the Americas. The past decade has been one in which the hemisphere has made remarkable progress and in which Canada's relations with its closest friends and neighbours have developed in new and exciting ways.

We will celebrate this progress and the spirit of co-operation that has transformed our community when the Prime Minister wel-

### Supply

comes the leaders of the democratically elected governments of the region to the third summit of the Americas in Quebec City in April.

The Americas is one of the world's most dynamic regions. Although its 800 million people are not even one-sixth of the world's population, they account for more than one-third of the world's economic activity. At about \$11 trillion U.S. the combined gross domestic product of the Americas is greater than that of the European Union.

At the Miami summit of the Americas in 1994, leaders endorsed a declaration and plan of action that expressed their common commitment to strengthening democracy and creating greater prosperity. They also committed themselves to practical measures to improve health care, increase access to quality education and protect biodiversity, to name but a few.

At the second summit in Santiago in 1998, leaders endorsed action to support the development of democratic institutions, protect human rights, and enhance transparency and respect for the rule of law. They also gave specific instructions to begin the process of negotiating the free trade area of the Americas. Once it is complete, the FTAA will be the world's largest free trade area.

Throughout today's debate, my colleagues and I on this side of the House will discuss in some depth the issues of access, services, investment and the need for coherence. I certainly hope hon. members across the aisle will join us in this important debate. However, I must admit that I suspect some members of the opposition will simply cast aspersions on the FTAA rather than offer constructive and realistic ideas. I would love to be proven wrong on that.

● (1045)

Only the opposition can simply say that everything the government does or proposes is fundamentally contrary to the interests of Canadians. The reality of governing is that we must assist Canadians in fulfilling their hopes and achieving their aspirations while providing real, meaningful assistance to the people of the Americas. The FTAA offers Canadians many more benefits that would clearly compel us to support these negotiations.

I am speaking too of the vast hemispheric dialogue on issues such as labour rights and environmental protection that have been fostered and promoted within the broader hemispheric movement. We all expect a free trade area of the Americas to create the conditions for greater prosperity. Without the chance to improve their economic situations through trade and investment, just how could poor countries of the hemisphere begin to address their real problems of poverty, of crime, of environmental degradation, and of threats to democracy and human rights?

We also know that there are vulnerable and excluded elements of our societies. There are challenges to our culture and to our values. There are indeed risks to some parts of our economies, risks that trade alone does not create and that the FTAA alone cannot resolve, but risks that concern our citizens nonetheless.

### *Supply*

What do we do? We cannot stand still and accept matters as they currently stand in Canada or anywhere else in the hemisphere if there is a chance to make them better. The facts are clear. Canada has done very well from its openness to trade and investment and has acquired the strength and experience to do even better in the future under even better rules. Therefore we must go forward.

A key objective in the FTAA negotiations is to achieve open and secure market access for goods produced within the free trade area. The elimination of tariffs is key to this objective. Some Canadian exporters face significant tariffs in key markets for important Canadian exports. Canada therefore supports an approach that will allow for early tariff elimination for some products in order to provide exporters the opportunity to expand trade quickly and reduce costs for consumers.

At the same time all countries have domestic industries that may require time to adjust to increased import competition. Consequently we expect that a transition period which allows for the phased elimination of some tariffs will also be negotiated.

Consistent with the approach taken in other negotiations, Canada will push for the elimination of tariffs on all non-agricultural products over a period not to exceed 10 years. Canada is also examining a transitional safeguard mechanism to protect producers from unforeseen difficulties associated with hemispheric trade liberalization. To ensure that only goods produced in the hemisphere benefit from preferential tariff treatment, a Canadian objective will be to negotiate appropriate rules of origin.

If there is one sector where new access could lead to significant benefits for Canada and for Canadian businesses, it is in the area of services. The service sector is a key engine of the Canadian economy. It is responsible for more than two-thirds of Canada's GDP, almost three-quarters of employment, some 10.5 million jobs, and nearly 90% of new job creation in Canada. It is leading the transformation of the Canadian economy into a knowledge based economy.

Canada is the 12th largest exporter of services in the world, exporting some \$51.8 billion worth in 1999 alone. The argument for supporting Canada's services exports is particularly eloquent when it comes to the Americas. Canada's commercial services exports to FTAA countries, excluding the United States and Mexico, were worth \$1.9 billion in 1998, up from \$787 million in 1993.

• (1050)

The Canadian telecommunications sector is enjoying tremendous success, exporting services valued at over \$2 billion per year and employing some 104,000 people. As a consequence, since 1993 the sector has been growing at a rate of just over 9% each and every year.

Still, Canadian exporters of telecommunications services face market access and regulatory restrictions in many countries of the hemisphere, in part due to the presence of telecommunications monopolies in several central and Latin American countries, the lack of transparency, predictability and timeliness in the process for awarding operating permits and licences or prohibitive fees for licensing or interconnection.

In recent years Canada's financial institutions have been very active in central and Latin America. One leading example is Scotiabank which is active in Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Costa Rica, Belize, El Salvador, Guyana, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Another good example is the National Bank which recently teamed up with three U.S. venture capital companies and a local Chilean partner to form the Corp Banca consortium in order to purchase banking institutions in South American countries.

The same is true for the insurance sector.

Another sector where Canadian expertise is renowned around the world, of course, is engineering and other related services. Canada is currently the world's third largest exporter of engineering services, and the high calibre of Canadian engineers is internationally recognized. That is why Canada is actively participating in the services negotiations under the free trade area of the Americas.

Canada has much to gain from the establishment of a comprehensive set of rules on trade and services under the FTAA. Canada's general objective in the services negotiations is to seek improved market access for Canadian service providers under a transparent and predictable rules based regime.

In the elaboration of FTAA rules on services, Canada will be guided by its existing rights and obligations in the North American Free Trade Agreement, the Canada-Chile Free Trade Agreement and the WTO General Agreement on Trade in Services, more commonly known as GATS.

While the link between trade, economic growth and jobs is well understood, the same is not true for the flip side of trade investment. Foreign investment has played a central role in Canada's development as a nation and remains essential to securing Canada's continued development and prosperity.

Canada's efforts toward a strong rules based system at the regional and multilateral levels are aimed at creating a solid basis for long term economic expansion and continued social progress. Investment rules provide for transparent, predictable and fair rules for Canadian investors, large and small.

Trade and investment rules give a medium sized economy like ours a great deal of leverage against the political pressure sometimes exerted by larger economies. Conversely, inward investment

in Canada coming from the non-NAFTA countries of the Americas totalled only \$3 billion in 1999.

Overall, Canada has a strong outward investment orientation in the Americas beyond the United States and Mexico. In this context, Canada has a strong interest in seeking a rules based, secure and predictable environment for investors and their investments in the hemisphere.

In the elaboration of FTAA investment rules, Canada will be guided and take into account past experiences with trade negotiations and the implementation of investment rules with other countries, including those of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Canada's main objective is to ensure a clear delineation of investment obligations that will serve our national interests. As is the case for other trade agreements, the FTAA investment chapter will allow countries to file exceptions for those measures they wish to maintain and what would otherwise not be allowed under the FTAA.

● (1055)

In addition, Canada will ensure that it preserves its ability to adopt or maintain regulations, administrative practices and other measures in sectors of key policy interest. I am specifically referring to our most treasured public health care system and our public education system. These are not open for debate or discussion by the Government of Canada.

The summit process ensures that economic growth through liberalized trade is linked to social development. Hemispheric co-operation on democracy, human rights, labour, employment and environmental issues, justice, health and other major issues proceeds within the same framework as the FTAA. The FTAA is complemented and reinforced by the efforts of many other ministers of the hemisphere, not just trade ministers.

For example, ministers of energy will meet in Mexico at the beginning of March. Ministers of the environment will meet in Montreal at the end of March. Finance ministers will meet in Toronto in early April. Ministers of labour will meet in Ottawa next October.

These collective and co-operative hemispheric efforts on specific issues such as labour, employment and the environment reflect an integrated approach to meeting summit commitments.

We welcome the opportunity to talk about the FTAA and we will never be shy to do so on any occasion. However the Bloc's motion is irrelevant, unfortunately, simply because the government has been at the forefront of the hemisphere in consulting openly with Canadians and with parliament. The kind of leadership my colleagues from the Bloc have called for today is something the

### *Supply*

government has demonstrated very clearly and repeatedly, and it will continue to do so.

The standing committee studied and published a report. Then the minister tabled the government's response to the report, which set the tone for our proposals for the FTAA at this stage. Had the Bloc consulted with all parties on their motion perhaps we might have been able to agree with it. Nonetheless, we on this side welcome the opportunity to debate it. I am convinced the FTAA process will benefit significantly from this parliamentary exchange on such a very important issue to the people of Canada.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to what the parliamentary secretary had to say, to what the former parliamentary secretary had to say, and to what the former chairman of the foreign affairs committee had to say. In all their summations they have been talking about an open and transparent system.

Hon. members also talked about the standing committee looking at the issue. I would tell them that the Canadian Alliance, the official opposition, put out its minority report at that time. One of the points we brought forward was exactly what the Bloc motion is today. We want parliament to debate.

The parliamentary secretary has just said what the government has been doing, which is fine, but the fact remains that exactly what he is doing in parliament is what the Bloc and the Alliance want: to discuss it in the House.

I congratulate the hon. member on his re-election. He thanked his constituents and I would like to say that they sent him here to talk on their behalf. He should be speaking on their behalf on the FTAA.

It is an American style of system. We want to discuss it in parliament where the elected officials are. I remind him that this is precisely what Australians included in their constitution, that all international agreements should be brought into parliament to be discussed by the elected representatives. What the problem is with that issue?

● (1100)

**Mr. Pat O'Brien:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his congratulations. First I want to assure him that in my 20 year career in elected public office at the municipal level and now at the federal level, if there is one thing that my constituents have been very clear about it is that they know with great certainty that I will be heard from in whatever forum in which I represent them and that certainly includes the House of Commons.

My colleague's question gives me the opportunity to do a little commercial on a trade day that we will hold in London, Ontario, on March 6, with my colleagues. Indeed, the Minister for International Trade and trade officials will be there. I will certainly be there with

*Supply*

my other colleagues to take all the questions that people have on how they can export and take advantage of the opportunities that exist in the export markets.

I hear something of a contradiction in what my colleague from the Alliance and, indeed, colleagues from the Bloc have said here today. First and foremost they call for greater transparency and consultation, but then they demand to see the Canadian position in the House right now. That is simply a contradiction. We have filed our position on five of the nine negotiating groups. It is on the website. We are getting responses every day to them. However, we have not finalized our position on the other four groups because the consultation that the hon. member calls for is ongoing right now. With whom? It is ongoing with NGOs, with individual Canadians, with stakeholders. When the full position is developed that will be the appropriate time to engage in a national debate. The consultation being called for is simply not complete.

I say again, and I am proud to say it, that the government is the leader in these negotiations on openness and transparency and it will continue to be that.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to comment briefly on something that was said about the relationship between trade, economic development and jobs.

After World War II and until quite recently, it was true that trade, economic development and jobs went hand in hand. Usually, when people had jobs, poverty receded and social rights improved.

Nowadays, this is no longer the case. Trade, economic development and jobs can all be on the increase, and poverty can still continue to grow.

While growth has been exceptional in the United States over the past 10 years, the number of poor remains the same. Poverty rates in the United States stand at 21%, compared to an OECD average of 12%.

So we must do more than merely rely on economic growth and globalization. There is a need for mechanisms to ensure that each society, each country, each jurisdiction, has the means to ensure that social rights are respected. In this regard, Canadians and Quebecers should be worried, as should all the Americas. We must ensure that social rights are part of these agreements.

I would like the member's opinion on the following statement made at the second general conference of parliamentarians of the Americas held in Puerto Rico in July 2000:

We hope that the process of continental integration is strengthened by the participation of parliamentarians from all jurisdictions on the continent, by the transparency of debate on the creation of a free trade area of the Americas, and by the regular dissemination of the results of ongoing negotiations.

Clearly, all parliamentarians of the Americas want the process to be more transparent.

What does the member think?

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat O'Brien:** Mr. Speaker, first of all allow me to congratulate my colleague from the Bloc on his very good maiden speech in the House and also on his appointment as trade critic. I look forward to constructively working with him and the other critics over the next couple of years.

The member made a very good point and one that we certainly know is valid, that is, in the midst of economic prosperity in any country, including Canada, we still have those who unfortunately are being left behind. There exists a dichotomy that none of us are happy with and it needs to be addressed. I fully agree with him on that matter.

• (1105)

However, on the need for more liberalized trade, I will quote from a UN report:

There is now widespread acceptance that, in the long run, the expansion of international trade and integration into the world economy are necessary instruments for promoting economic growth and reducing and eradicating poverty.

Those words come from the United Nations. They are fully endorsed by the secretary general of the United Nations, Mr. Kofi Annan, who has said that the best thing we can do for the poor in our own nation or the poor around the world is to liberalize trade. That is the best way we can address the problem of world poverty. Those words come from people far more expert than I, and I endorse them.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your new position. This is the first time you have been in the chair when I have had an opportunity to speak.

First, I congratulate the Bloc Quebecois member on his motion.

[*English*]

It is a very important and huge issue. I would like to ask my friend from the government two questions on two separate issues. The first deals with the opponents to free trade who we have seen in Seattle and other areas. I wonder if the hon. member would address the House and tell us what the government is going to do to address this issue, because a lot of those people actually are opposing issues and solutions that are going to help the poorest of the poor.

One of the great misnomers is that the people who oppose free trade think their actions are going to help the poorest of the poor,



but in the erection of the barriers to trade that they want to actually implement, they are doing the worst possible thing for developing countries. The best thing we can do for a developing country is lessen the barriers to trade so that country can become more economically sustainable.

I would like the member to address that and also address how the government can better engage these people. They do have some important concerns in terms of freer trade and how we can deal with issues such as labour laws, labour regulations and job and working conditions.

My last point deals with addressing the issue of the movement of short term capital that has been so destabilizing in international markets. We have seen that the movement of large amounts of capital in the short term destabilized international markets. I ask the hon. member what his government is going to do to address this issue.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien:** Mr. Speaker, I am so pleased to hear my colleague from the Canadian Alliance address the concern that many of us on this side of the House share as well. Very well-meaning people, some of them personal friends of mine in London, Ontario, just simply do not seem to understand the point the member has made: that the best way to address poverty here in Canada and around the world is to do what the UN is calling for and continue to liberalize trade.

I will quote UN Secretary General Kofi Annan who he said that tariffs must go. In his new report he says that rich countries should remove all barriers to goods and services from poor countries. That would put at least \$100 billion a year into the pockets of the world's poor, more than double what they now get in foreign aid.

I fully endorse the member's comments on the need for liberalizing trade. The Minister for International Trade certainly does and so does everyone on this side of the House. I am pleased to agree with the member on that.

Regarding the opportunities for consultation, there have been many and there will continue to be many, both through our position on the website and with groups that can come to the standing committee. We welcome all consultation possible.

**Mr. John Williams:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege. This morning, as you may recall, at approximately 10.15 a.m. you tabled a report in the House from the Canadian Human Rights Commission. As you may also have noticed, the contents of the report were reported in the Toronto *Star* and in the *Sun*, and I heard it on the CBC radio news this morning as well.

I was able to acquire only one copy of the report from the distribution people of the House of Commons. I feel that our privileges as members of parliament are being breached in the fact that the Canadian Human Rights Commission is obviously putting

### *Supply*

its spin on this document before it is tabled in the House and before it is available to members.

How can members read the report if copies are not available?

I would ask that the Minister of Justice take up this issue with the Canadian Human Rights Commission and let the commission know that it is time it respected parliament.

• (1110)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member. That is not really a question of privilege, but if you wanted to pass on a message, it has been done.

**Mr. Monte Solberg (Medicine Hat, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise and join in the debate today, but first of all let me offer my congratulations to you on assuming your new position.

Just to remind the House and people who are watching today, the motion that we are discussing is as follows: that the government be required to subject any project or accord on a free trade agreement with the Americas to a debate and a vote before it is ratified by the government. It sounds eminently sensible.

I want to point out that our party, both as the Alliance and as the Reform Party, has for a number of years supported the idea of bringing major treaties and major free trade agreements to the House of Commons for ratification. This is entirely consistent with our current policy as well. In fact, one of my colleagues, the current House leader of the Canadian Alliance, has brought forward motions in the past recommending something very similar to what we see in today's motion.

However, in saying that I also have to point out that the other side of the House has been much less consistent in its respect for democracy when it comes to ratifying these sorts of agreements via debate and a vote in the House of Commons.

Let me take members back through a bit of the history, as I recall it, of some of the things that have occurred here over the last seven years while I have been a member of parliament and that run completely contrary not only to the letter of the motion that I just read, but also to the spirit of it.

The first one that comes to mind is the MAI, the multilateral agreement on investment. Many of my colleagues will remember just how interested the public was in that particular negotiation that was going on with Canada, the United States and several European countries. To refresh people's memories, that was a negotiation to establish some kind of protocol for investment among these 20 or so countries. The idea was that it would really encourage free trade in investment and some rules to protect companies that had invested in other countries.

*Supply*

I will not get into the merits of it at this point, but I do want to point out that at the time there were a number of meetings held around the country. People were very concerned about this. We all received mail. They were not concerned about it based on what was in the agreement, because they had no idea of what was being negotiated. They were concerned because they had no information. Some groups, very irresponsible groups to my mind, were spreading disinformation about what this would mean to Canada. They were scaring people. They were suggesting that the world as we knew it would come to an end if we approved the MAI.

However, the government unfortunately thought that the way to handle this was to hide it from the public. The result was that the government got exactly the opposite result it had hoped for. The government wanted the public to support it, I suppose, because at that time the trade minister spoke very much in favour of it, but of course when people do not have access to information, they tend to be afraid of an issue and concerned about it. Those irresponsible groups spread all kinds of disinformation that fed upon that fear. As a result, we received hundreds of letters from people saying they could not support the MAI because it would effectively give away Canada's sovereignty in all kinds of areas, which to my mind was complete nonsense.

Having said that, it does not diminish at all the concerns of a lot of people, because they simply did not have the information. What it ultimately took to bring this issue to the House was the Reform Party actually proposing a supply day motion on the subject of the MAI so that for the first time it was debated in the House of Commons. It took an opposition party to do it, and afterward the international trade minister said the government had debated it in the House of Commons so the government had been up front with people. However, it took a motion from the Reform Party to do it. This government does not have a very good history when it comes to ensuring that people know about these sort of things.

• (1115)

Perhaps even more important, I think it betrays a philosophy of the government. The philosophy of this government is to hide as much as it can from the public and to go about its business. We see this over and over again. The debate and vote the other night on the issue of the ethics watchdog is a perfect example of what I am talking about. The government does not like democracy because it undermines its power. It would much rather proceed about its business without the scrutiny of this place.

I urge all members here to remember that we are elected by the people to be their watchdogs as to what is going on. What happens when we do not have the chance to scrutinize these things in parliament, we lose our ability to be those watchdogs. We cannot do our job as representatives of the people if the big issues that profoundly affect people's lives, such as free trade agreements and other international treaties like the international criminal court and others, are not discussed in this place.

How do we get the information? How do we have the benefit of hearing the debate if these things are not discussed in this place? This place is supposed to be the home of democracy in Canada, the home of free speech, but the government does just about everything it can to avoid bringing these big issues here. That is unfortunate. I think it is an affront to free speech and democracy. It betrays an attitude that the government seems to work by that I think most people would find to be irresponsible. It would suggest that too many times that the government goes out of its way to purposely ignore the public.

There are many other example, one of which is the Kyoto accord. Just to remind people, Kyoto was an agreement, that many countries were prepared to enter into, which would restrict emissions that supposedly contribute to the greenhouse effect and cause a raising of temperatures around the world, that sort of thing.

Of course we never got a chance to discuss it in this place. In fact the government, to its credit, went and discussed it with the provinces. Then, when its members went to Kyoto, they turned around and effectively stabbed the provinces in the back and agreed to something completely different from what they told the provinces they were willing to do. They completely changed the agreement.

Here we are in a situation where the government ignored parliament completely. It never even suggested for a moment that this agreement would come back to this place for a vote. It also stabbed the provinces in the back and, in its inimitable way, managed to drive a wedge again between the federal and provincial governments and create some of that nastiness between the two that contributes to the unity problems that seem to be a perpetual state in Canada. We now see it rearing its head in the west again.

My point is that, contrary to the benefit of Canadians, the government has ignored this place when it comes to discussing these sort of treaties and agreements. The result is that people do not get the information they need, members of parliament are not allowed to do their jobs and, ultimately, I think the government enters into agreements that very often do not reflect the values and wishes of Canadians.

Let me give members a third example, the example of the international criminal court. The international criminal court is an agreement that Canada has signed on to that would really, to some degree, and I know this is in dispute, give up our sovereignty when it comes to our ability to set our own laws. Many people are concerned about multinational corporations which come and, they believe, erode our sovereignty.

• (1120)

What about the situation where Canada was prepared to sign away our ability to ensure that Canadian citizens were not pro-



tected under Canadian law, but in fact are now subject to a new international law?

This is especially important for a country like Canada which is often engaged in peacekeeping operations. What it effectively does is allow Canadian peacekeepers or, in cases of war, Canadian soldiers, to be subject to decisions by international courts that could completely strip away our ability to protect the people and have them tried by laws with which we agree, understand and which are a part of our tradition.

The concern, which has also been raised by other countries, is what would happen if we entered into another conflict like Kosovo where we had Canadian soldiers fighting in that conflict or pilots flying CF-18s who may have bombed, even by accident, a civilian site. We might lose our ability to protect them and ensure that they did not all of a sudden become subject to an accusation of a war crime. That is the sort of thing that I think Canadians would be interested in having debated and discussed in this place.

I will not get into the merits of the international criminal court. I will simply make the point that the issues are serious enough that they should be debated in the House of Commons.

What does it mean to be a democracy if issues that profoundly affect people's lives are not discussed in the forum where their elected representatives are supposed to discuss these things? When did we decide as a country that huge issues, like the ones I have just discussed, should be determined solely by a few people in the priorities and planning committee of cabinet on the government side?

That is not democracy. That is certainly not what the founders of our country envisioned when they set up the system that we have today. I think a lot of people who have no interest in international treaties will agree that this place no longer is the type of democratic forum that was envisioned 133 years ago. It is no longer the type of place that people have confidence in when it comes to ensuring that their views and values are reflected through their members of parliament.

There are a number of reasons for that but certainly one of them is that governments do not bring big decisions to this place. That should end. All the debate on the other side that we have heard so far has been a justification for the sorry position that we are in today. What they have said so far is completely without merit. No one can argue that the House of Commons should not be engaged in these sorts of serious issues.

Having tried my best to make a case that we need to be engaged in these things and that these things have to come here for a vote, let me now make the case for the importance of free trade, which is the other element in this whole discussion.

Coming up very quickly is the summit of the Americas meetings in Quebec City, which Canada will host and chair.

### *Supply*

The Canadian Alliance supports in principle the concept of free trade. We believe very much that free trade does leave people better off.

However, there is even a more fundamental argument for supporting the idea of free trade. In this day and age, when we hear much heady talk about the need for the respect of universal human rights, we too often ignore a very basic human right: the right to own, use and sell property. It is a basic right. I would argue that it is almost impossible to practice the other rights that we typically think of, such as the right to free speech, for instance, without that other basic right, the right to own, use and sell property. Without that right there is no economic freedom.

I will give an example. If we have freedom of speech but the government owns all the printing presses or all the telephones and it is the one that decides who gets the printing presses and the telephones, then our right to free speech is severely limited. It is the same with many other freedoms: the right to labour and the right to move around the country as we see fit. Those are all completely abridged if we do not have that right to acquire and use property. Too often we forget about that.

• (1125)

I make the argument that from a philosophical standpoint free trade makes sense. It is a universal human right or the consequence of a universal human right, and that right is the right to own, use and enjoy property. Remember the call of the glorious revolution of 1688 and John Locke: the right to life, liberty and property. I believe in it fundamentally and I think we should recognize it and respect it around the world. I believe that is what is implied when we agree to free trade.

I will talk for a moment about the evidence that supports the contention that free trade basically leaves people better off.

I will not bore the House by going into the details of how the Liberals opposed NAFTA, how they said that they would make big changes when they were elected, and, of course, never did, but I will point out one of the concerns raised on the other side during the NAFTA discussions. The concern was that countries with cheaper labour costs would, on the one hand, undermine our ability to compete because they had cheap labour and, on the other hand, exploit us when it came to labour standards and the environment.

I think what members will find is that the record does not bear that out. As we look at Mexico today under NAFTA, it is becoming more and more prosperous. It has a larger middle class than Canada, believe it or not. One reason for that is the North American Free Trade Agreement, NAFTA, and the free exchange of goods and services, the efficiencies that it creates and the ability of people who have been desperately poor in the past to finally climb out of the trap of poverty created by barriers to trade. We have to start to

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remove those barriers. That is why free trade makes so much sense. We see more and more evidence of it all the time.

My friend from across the way pointed out that the UN said that we must start to liberalize trade around the world. The poorest countries in the world are the ones with the most trade barriers. If we look at Africa, which is so desperately poor and those people need our help, it has the highest barriers to trade. It is a country that rejects free markets. It rejects the fundamental freedom to use property and trade as one sees fit as long as the equal rights of others to do the same are not impeded.

The evidence is very clear that we have to start to lower the barriers. When we do we will all be better off. Initially, we see a situation where labour standards are very low and the environment is in trouble. However, what we find is that when countries get better off they put more and more money into those things and the environment improves, labour standards rise, people make more money and employers have an interest in ensuring that their people are safe because they do not want to pay workers' compensation. Those are all the things that we take for granted in Canada.

I argue that we need to have free trade because it makes sense. It helps people everywhere.

My final point is that Canada has to practise what it preaches. In Canada today we still have trade barriers that make it impossible for third world countries to trade into Canada. That is a huge hypocrisy. Tariffs are very high for instance on textiles, something that third world countries could produce. If we allowed that to happen we would be helping them far more than by just giving them aid like we so often do. We would give them the basis for an economy that would leave their people much better off. There are many examples of tariffs that are currently in place in Canada that impede the ability of these third world countries to trade into Canada but also for us to go and establish markets there and leave our people better off.

In conclusion, I would argue that this House needs to be the place where these things are discussed first and foremost. It would probably to some degree end this end run around democracy that we have now, where these unelected, unaccountable NGOs run to the government to have their voices heard. However, if they knew they could have their voices heard here they would do it.

• (1130)

Second, free trade is a good thing. It leaves people better off and it is the compassionate thing to do. For that reason, I urge the government to support this motion.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I congratulate my colleague, the critic for

foreign affairs, for an eloquent speech on a number of issues. He brought up many pressing points and I hope the government was listening.

There are a couple of areas that I would like his advice on as the previous finance critic for the party. The first one concerns barriers to trade. I would like him to address the issue of Canada's foreign policy with respect to how we should be more aggressive at removing the barriers to trade with developing countries and that we should remove double taxation issues with respect to our country and developing countries. Double taxation is actually something that restricts the ability of companies to be more aggressive in terms of their dealings and bilateral trade between two nations.

The second issue is barriers to trade within Canada. We have more barriers to trade east-west than we have north-south. I am sure the public would find it absolutely appalling that it is more difficult for my province of British Columbia to trade with Quebec or Ontario than it is for us to trade with the United States.

Last, I ask the previous finance critic to comment on a question I posed to the government on the issue of how we can deal with short term capital flows which are so destabilizing to the international community. It is something we have been unable to deal with. There has been a proposal by the NDP to apply the Tobin tax to this issue. While it is an utterly imperfect solution to the problem, at least it is a move to bring this to the forefront. We absolutely have to deal with the way we deal with short term capital flows in this globalized market.

I wonder if my colleague would have any thoughts on how we can help to limit that so we allow capital flows to occur without making them a destabilizing factor in our growing globalized economy?

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, first, let me deal with the last issue he raised. I may have to disagree with him a little bit on this. He raised the issue of short term capital flows and suggested that they were very destabilizing, especially when they occurred I expect during the Asian economic crisis couple of years ago. That bears some discussion.

The first point I would make about that is really what those short term capital flows reflected was a fundamental problem in that country. It may have been in some cases a situation where banks were out on a limb when it came to holding the paper of, for instance, a lot of banks that simply could not be supported. At some point investors become very nervous and they see it as a disaster in the making and pull their capital out of that country.

One of the problems is that we know that some of these countries are willing to put barriers in place to stop that from happening. Very often investors will want to get their money out of there before those barriers are put in place to stop them from getting their money out. In some ways I would argue that the ability of countries

to put these barriers up act as a catalyst and actually make the problem worse.

The second point I would make is that this is only a symptom of the real problem. The real problem is what needs to be addressed. The short term capital flows are the symptom. The real problem is poor financial management in these countries. Very often it is crony capitalism where government and private institutions or private companies become completely integrated and decisions are not made on the basis of market signals. They are made on the basis of decisions that involve concerns of the government. They have political concerns and they are not always interested in the interests of their people. Sometimes they make decisions that simply benefit their political interests.

I would argue that those are the first problems that need to be resolved. If those sorts of problems are resolved, the issue of short term capital flows will become I think less critical.

• (1135)

The final point I would make is if people are investors and they invest in that country, does it make sense that those people should have to have their investments locked into that country, knowing that the currency will probably devalue terribly and their investment may be completely wiped out. That is the other side of the coin. The situation the investors are in is that they could see their investments completely wiped out. Remember that we all now have the ability to invest in other countries through merging market funds and that kind of thing.

I want to make a second point with respect to barriers to trade. Canada is engaged in a gross hypocrisy right now. On the one hand, we say that we care and that is why we want to give all kinds of aid to other countries. It is necessary that we give that aid. I understand that. We believe in humanitarian and developmental aid.

However, we should not say that we care very much on the one hand by offering aid and on the other hand say that we are going to block the ability of these countries to develop their own economies by putting in place barriers that prohibit the export of textiles from whatever developing country it is into Canada. This is a perfect example because textiles are something that are easy for those developing countries to produce. However, we make it impossible for them to get on their feet by putting these barriers in place.

Why do we say on the one hand we care, but on the other hand make it impossible for them to sell into our market? That is hypocrisy and that kind of thing should end.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I know Mr. Speaker is new in the chair, but the tradition in the House,

### *Supply*

when people are rising on questions and comments from a party other than the person who has given the main speech, is to recognize members from other parties. If members from other parties do not stand, then it is fair ball to recognize members from the same party as the speaker. However, that is not the case in this instance.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** What happened a while ago was when I asked for questions or comments only two members from the Canadian Alliance stood up.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** I just stood now.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Bélair):** Yes, but that was before your intervention. Now that you stood up I should have recognized you instead of the other hon. member. However, now that the mistake has been made I still have to honour my word and give the floor to the member for Calgary East.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure we will be hearing a speech from my NDP colleague and his points of view, which I know very well.

I would ask my colleague over here this question. Today's motion talks about transparency regarding the elected officials looking at international agreements. At no time have we talked about consultation with the provinces or the provinces having a right to look at international agreements and making it part of where they give their own approvals because it impacts them.

As an example, Australia has a joint session where it consults the provinces and then it puts its stamp on international agreements. I would appreciate his thoughts on that.

**Mr. Monte Solberg:** Mr. Speaker, I will try and be brief to accommodate my friend from the NDP. Simply, in Canada's constitution the provinces are responsible for all kinds of things, including natural resources, which can be profoundly impacted by free trade agreements. It makes sense, it would be a courtesy and it would help unity if the federal government would come down off its high horse once in a while and honestly engage in some kind of discussion with the provinces.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry I did not get to ask the hon. member for Medicine Hat a question but that is the way it goes.

I would like to speak on behalf of the NDP caucus to this Bloc Québécois motion. We welcome the motion and support it. We are somewhat surprised by the apparent reluctance of the government to support the motion.

*Supply*

• (1140)

What the motion calls for is really no less and no more than what the Conservative government did in 1988 when it put before the House the elements of the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement which had been negotiated. The negotiations were over. The elements of the agreement were put to the House of Commons for a vote.

Why the Liberal government at this point would refuse to indicate a willingness to do the same with any FTAA agreement is quite beyond me. It is not just a question of transparency leading up to the negotiations or how many papers are on the website. At the moment there are only four papers out of nine.

I wish to indicate, Mr. Speaker, that I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Vancouver East.

In any event, it is not just a question of what happens leading up to negotiations, it is also a question of what happens, God forbid from our point of view, that these negotiations should actually ever be completed and we should have a free trade area of the Americas agreement.

Is the Liberal government really saying in its response to the Bloc motion that it would not put such an agreement to the House of Commons for debate and a vote? Is that really the position of the Liberals on this? They have not made it clear. They have done a lot of talking about what they are doing now and have tried to give an air of adequacy to what really has so far been a quite inadequate process. Perhaps we could have some clarity on that. We know the Liberals are always interested in clarity.

Perhaps we could get some clarity from the Liberals on what their position would be should there ever be an FTAA agreement and whether or not it would come before the House. If they are prepared to make that commitment, then why would they not vote for the Bloc motion and we could establish once and for all that this would be the process should there ever be an agreement?

Part of the problem is that in this country, and I think it has been pointed out by a previous speaker, the treaty making power lies with the crown rather than with parliament. We have far too many examples of Canadian governments being able to enter into treaties and to renegotiate and amend treaties without ever having to come to parliament, not just with respect to free trade, but also for instance with respect to NATO.

This is the only country of all the NATO countries that did not have a motion put in its national parliament to debate and ratify for instance the expansion of NATO. All other 14 countries of the then 15 NATO countries had a debate and a vote. Even in the U.K. where it has the same system as us and it does not actually have to have a vote and a debate, had one. It is only in Canada where the government and the Prime Minister presume make these kinds of

agreements on behalf of the whole country without involving parliamentarians in any meaningful way.

I listened carefully to what the Bloc members had to say about their own motion. I must say I think this does reflect an evolution in the Bloc Quebecois' position with respect to free trade. We know for a fact that free trade was very popular in Quebec in 1988.

Even in 1992 and 1993 leading up to the NAFTA, I recall an occasion in the House where the NDP moved a motion critical of NAFTA, calling on the House not to sign a North American Free Trade Agreement and the Bloc members at that time voted with the government against the NDP. They even voted against a Liberal amendment at that time which said such an agreement might be okay if it included provisions for the protection of workers and the environment. Still the Bloc voted with the Conservative government against that amendment.

• (1145)

We know the position of the various leaders within the Quebec sovereignty movement. Jacques Parizeau is a very big fan of free trade and the free trade agreements. As Mr. Parizeau is want to do, sometimes he boasted about the effect free trade would have on Canada and the fact that it would break down east-west ties and erode the strength of Canada as a country and therefore make it easier for sovereignty to occur.

This is the backdrop for the Bloc motion today. I think what is happening within the Bloc, if I might be permitted this analysis, is that it is finally dawning on sovereignists in Quebec what the NDP and others outside of parliament have been saying about the effect of free trade agreements on the sovereignty of all legislatures, whether they be national parliaments or they be subnational legislatures. The insight about the effect of free trade agreements on the sovereignty of such bodies is finally beginning to get through to sovereignists in Quebec.

They see that there is not much point in debating sovereignty in a federal-provincial context if at the same time one is complacent or even complicit in the development of these supernational institutions, these free trade agreements and world trade agreements that in the end render the sovereignty of Canada or the potential sovereignty of Quebec almost meaningless.

In that respect I would call the attention of the House to a letter written only a week or two ago by the California state legislature to United States trade representative, Mr. Zoellick. It stated:

As the legislative representatives of the world's sixth largest economy, we write to express our concern about the impact of certain trade policies on the institution in which we serve and on important democratic norms. We recognize that the United



States constitution grants the federal government power to conduct foreign relations. We also recognize the economic importance of trade to California and the role that trade can play in fostering positive relationships between nations.

We are concerned, however, that as presently administered the North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization agreements diminish the sovereignty of states such as California, and in so doing, shift decision making power from elected officials to unelected international trade officials. In the paragraphs that follow we detail the reasons for our concern.

It seems to me that this is the critical issue with respect to these free trade agreements.

I listened to the Bloc speeches and there was appropriate criticism of free trade agreements as having created polarization between the rich and the poor, not ensuring that the so-called benefits of free trade are evenly or justly distributed.

In the final analysis that is not the main complaint against free trade. We could debate the so-called economic benefits. There are winners and losers. I happen to think that there are more losers than winners.

The real loser in all these free trade agreements is democracy. That is why I would have felt better if members of the Bloc would have made it clear that they were against these agreements in principle. The real loser in these agreements is the ability of all governments, whether they be federal or provincial, to act in the public interest, whether that be acting in the public interest with respect to the environment, food safety, labour standards, protection of water exports, protection of cultural diversity, or whatever the case may be.

The real loser when it comes to these agreements is democracy and the sovereignty of democratic states and democratic subnational states such as Quebec or other Canadian provinces, as well as states in other countries. This is something that I simply cannot get through the thick, right wing skulls of my Alliance colleagues. They are concerned about the power of parliament. They are always going on and on about the power of parliament. Parliament is being gutted every day by these agreements, and no one over there seems to care.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague from the NDP was calling for a little more clarity from the government, so I would like to ask him a question and seek to provide some clarity on the process as we understand it on this side of the House.

The government negotiates trade agreements to promote Canadian trade interests based on extensive consultations with Canadians, NGOs, parliamentary committee and business organizations, et cetera. Only when Canada is satisfied that the agreement is in the interests of the country would that agreement be signed.

• (1150)

The process in all these agreements to which the member has referred is that parliament was asked to approve the agreement

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after a careful review and debate of the implementing legislation. That is the normal process that has been followed in the House of Commons throughout Canadian history. It is a process that will be followed in this very important negotiation.

I do not understand the member's confusion. I hope that the reiteration of what has been our policy since Confederation clarifies matters.

I would like to ask the member a question. Does he not see the Bloc motion as written as rather vague, as wanting to create a situation that was referred to earlier by the chair of the standing committee? It would seek to change the Canadian constitution in effect and create something that has never existed in the House throughout our entire history. Does he not see that as the case?

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, I did not think that arguments about change were sort of prima facie inadmissible on the floor of the House of Commons. If nothing can be changed, why does anyone run for office? Why not just freeze the status quo in some kind of political suspended animation? Of course they are making an argument for change, but I also think that it is not that radical a change. It is not that different from the way I remember it in 1988, where we had an opportunity to debate and vote on the elements of the agreement.

Granted, it had been signed by Simon Reisman, but whether or not it was ratified until after parliament had its say probably bears some checking by the hon. member.

In any event, if I am wrong on the facts with respect to 1988, I do not think I am wrong, in my opinion or in the Bloc's opinion, on the principle of the matter, that before anything is finally ratified it should in fact come before the House of Commons. If that is a difference between what the Canadian practice has been and what the motion calls for, so be it. Perhaps we should change the way we do things around here.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, before asking my question, I would like to point out a number of facts.

First of all, the Bloc stands up for the consensus in the Quebec civil society, and among parliamentarians. I have had the opportunity to address this issue. The institutions committee of the National Assembly published a report with which we totally agree and which I commend to the hon. member.

Our position is not to be against economic integration or market openness, since developing countries in the south are as much entitled to development as developed countries in the north.

*Supply*

However, this economic integration must follow some rules, and we want those rules to be included in the agreement and access to the benefits of the agreement to be given in the respect of those rights.

Before asking my question, I will conclude by saying that Mr. Parizeau has been one of the fiercest opponents to the multilateral investment agreement. He even wrote a small book on the subject, which I would gladly offer to the hon. member.

I would now like to return to the issue of social and labour rights. I am wondering what the position of the New Democratic Party is on the inclusion of those rights in the current negotiation.

[*English*]

**Mr. Bill Blaikie:** Mr. Speaker, our position with respect to social rights is that they ought to be part and parcel of any trade agreement the government enters into. We sometimes wonder whether or not agreements which have as their basic assumption the whole notion of free trade or any such clauses, even if they are inserted into such agreements, could be effective.

I would remind the member that when the WTO implementing legislation was before the House it was the NDP in 1994, not the Bloc, that moved amendments to that legislation which called on the government to work toward a social clause in the WTO and to report progress back to the House, although I would say that the Bloc supported our motion with respect to the social clause at that time.

• (1155)

I think the question is still open as to whether or not simply inserting these social clauses into these agreements is enough. From the point of view of the NDP the basic philosophy of these agreements is simply wrong. They are designed by and for multinational corporations to inhibit the power of government not just with respect to social policy or labour standards.

Even if we were to adopt either the side agreements or social clauses these agreements would still be objectionable to us because the very principle of them is to enshrine the power of the marketplace over against the power of governments to act in the public interest. Creating a few exceptions and a few fancy clauses here and there will just not do the trick as far as we are concerned.

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to follow the member for Winnipeg—Transcona and speak today in support of this important motion. A very basic principle is being established in the motion which reads:

That this House demand that the government bring any draft agreement on the Free Trade Zone of the Americas before the House so that it may be debated and put to a vote before ratification by the Government of Canada.

It is somewhat surprising that a motion that deals with such a fundamental principle of debate within the House of Commons is something that has to be brought forward by an opposition party. It begs the question and highlights for us the gravity of the situation we are facing as the Government of Canada enters into these agreements.

The free trade area of the Americas, or the FTAA as it is known, equals NAFTA, the WTO, GATT and the MAI all rolled into one very powerful piece of trade legislation that has nothing to do with freedom.

It has everything to do with a transfer of massive powers from democratically elected governments to transnational corporations and a globalized corporate agenda which is about the suppression of democracy. That is the fundamental point that needs to be made. That is why any document or agreement on the FTAA must be brought to the House to be debated by members of the House and by the people of Canada.

The fundamental purpose of these agreements is to constrain all levels of government. We are not just talking about a national government or provincial governments, but even at the municipal level. Their purpose is to restrain all governments in their delivery of services and to allow transnational corporations access to public services, whether it be health care, hospitals, home care, dental care, child care, elder care, education, social assistance, environmental protection programs, transportation or culture. Those are the programs very much at threat as a result of the proposed FTAA.

I should like to quote the chair of the Council of Canadians who recently produced a very excellent report consisting of 40 pages entitled "The Free Trade Area of the Americas and the Threat to Social Programs, Environmental Sustainability and Social Justice in Canada and the Americas". Ms. Barlow is well known for her work in providing education and awareness of the threat posed by these agreements. In the section outlining what impact there will be from the FTAA on Canadians she said:

The expanded powers proposed for the FTAA in combination with Chapter 11 of NAFTA and the introduction of "universal coverage of all service sectors" pose a grave threat to Canada's social programs. Universal health care, public education, child care, pensions, social assistance and many other social services are now delivered by governments on a not-for-profit basis.

• (1200)

She went on to say:

Until the recent GATS negotiations, and now the FTAA negotiations, Canada has always maintained that these social programs were a fundamental right of citizenship for all Canadians, and have exempted them from trade agreements. However, with these two agreements, the Canadian government is opening up itself, and every other level of government, to trade-sanctioned threats by transnational service corporations keen to break down the existing government monopolies in the hemisphere.



That lays out very clearly what we are facing in this round of negotiations. Of particular concern to us in the NDP, outlined by my colleague from Winnipeg—Transcona, are the investor state provisions that again are included in what is being proposed in this FTAA round of negotiations. This is something similar to what we have seen in NAFTA.

Indeed, in the NDP minority report produced in October 1999 we laid out very clearly what the impact is of investor state provisions and what has already happened in Canada as a result of those provisions being included in chapter 11 of NAFTA.

I will quote from my colleague's minority report in which he says:

Canadians have already seen how such a mechanism can be used by foreign investors to intimidate and sue their elected governments. Last year, U.S. based Ethyl Corporation successfully used the NAFTA investor-state procedure to extract \$19 million from Canadian taxpayers, and to force the Canadian government to rescind its ban on the potentially toxic gasoline additive MMT.

That is what has already taken place under chapter 11. There are now other challenges underway, including one from Sun Belt Water Inc. in California that is looking to leave Canadians on the hook for as much as \$10.5 billion U.S. That again brings us back to the issue of what is threatened under the FTAA.

One of the things I am very concerned about is the impact on municipalities. Right now in Vancouver, where I am from, a case taking place before the B.C. supreme court is a challenge by the Mexican government as a result of an earlier decision made by a NAFTA dispute panel in August 2000 in favour of the U.S. based Metalclad Corporation, which was seeking to locate a toxic waste plant in a town in Mexico. The local community and the national government opposed it. This is now again being challenged under NAFTA.

The impact of these trade agreements on local communities and their ability to control their own environment and health and the well-being of their own citizens is something that is very seriously undermined and would be completely violated if these particular agreements go ahead.

I want to spend my remaining minutes talking about the democratic process. It seems to me that one of the real signs of hope as we take on this struggle of trying to defeat these agreements has been the rise in the level of activism, particularly among young people. As we know, already there are incredible plans and campaigns underway to demonstrate, to rally, to educate and to build public awareness about just what is at stake in April in Quebec City.

The question we have is that while on the one hand we have the Prime Minister in China finally raising the issue of human rights in that country, what are the Prime Minister and the government prepared to do to defend people's human rights here in Canada? All

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indications are that we are now in the process of setting up a police state, a state of security around this international conference, to prevent citizens from being heard, from being seen, from being able to assemble and from having the right to free speech.

This is something we have seen before in Canada with APEC and the people's summit and the pepper spraying that took place. We are again seeing the those kinds of preparations being made to prevent people from exercising their democratic rights.

• (1205)

This motion is important, but it is only the tip of the iceberg. We have to stop these agreements, we have to defeat them and we have to defend the rights of citizens to organize, to mobilize and to speak out against these agreements. In supporting this motion, I hope all members of the House will go further and ensure that people who come from across Canada and want to take up this issue in Quebec City will not be denied their democratic rights to express their opinions about what these agreements are about and what kinds of threats they pose to our democratic system.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Ghislain Lebel (Chambly, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to the comments of our colleague from the New Democratic Party.

Unfortunately, like her and like most of the members here, I know very little about these negotiations. Everything is secret. The discussions are kept incommunicado and we do not know what the talks are all about.

Besides all the concerns expressed earlier by my colleagues on this side of the House, one issue worries me especially. Maybe it is no longer the case, but the member made a brief reference to that situation earlier. I wonder what a country like Canada will gain from such negotiations, when we know what is going on in some countries which, out of courtesy, I will not name.

For example, a few years ago, in the copper mines of a certain South American country, children, young girls, worked in water and mud up to their waist, carrying pails of the clay soil from which copper is extracted. These six, seven or eight year old children suffer from arthritis just like old people.

I wonder if my colleague worries about that. Why should we negotiate a free trade agreement with countries where citizens are treated that way?

*[English]*

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, the member's thoughtful question gets to the point of another major concern around the negotiation of these agreements, that is, they have been so often

*Supply*

characterized as a race to the bottom. Environmental standards, labour standards, and standards that protect the health and well-being of a community and ensure that children are not exploited for their labour go out the window. All of these very important fundamental principles of human dignity and human respect are basically abandoned as a result of these agreements.

These are not empty words. There is mounting global evidence about the impact on local communities of other agreements that have been negotiated, particularly on communities in developing countries that become beholden to these multinational corporations that go in and destroy the environment and local culture and communities.

The member's question certainly highlights this very destructive aspect of these agreements and I share his concern. It is another reason why the motion should be approved: so that we can have a full debate in the House on the impact of the FTAA, not just in Canada but in all of the Americas and indeed globally.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to the Bloc member who is saying all of this is secret, I would be happy to give him the address of the website which he obviously does not know exists.

My question to my colleague from the NDP is simply this: what is her response to the following statement?

There is now widespread acceptance that, in the long run, the expansion of international trade and integration into the world economy are necessary instruments for promoting economic growth and reducing and eradicating poverty.

The quote comes from a recently released UN report. How can the member tell us that international trade is not important in addressing the problem of poverty?

**Ms. Libby Davies:** Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to respond to that question because I do not believe that I or any of my colleagues in the NDP have said that this debate is about stopping international trade. International trade is very important to our global community.

• (1210)

The issue before the House and before the government on behalf of the Canadian people is what rules will be established for that international trade. As the hon. member knows, our concern, which should be his concern as well, is that these agreements basically transfer authority and power from democratically elected governments to multinational corporations that are completely undemocratic. Therefore, the realm of trade and decisions around the programs we have are completely outside of any elected body. That is our concern, and I think the hon. member knows that.

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC):** Mr. Speaker, it is certainly a pleasure to play a role in this debate. I must tell the

House that it takes me back to 1988, when I was elected after a very controversial election that was totally based on free trade. The Progressive Conservative Party totally supported free trade. We in our party advocated it and proposed it and the Liberal candidates were all opposed to it. There were all those terrible stories about what was going to happen to our sovereignty, our water, our resources and all the gloom and doom that was going to fall on Canada because of free trade.

Here we are 12 years later and the Liberals are proposing to enhance free trade. Members will have to excuse me if I find this ironic. In December 1988 we came to the House day and night to argue the pros and cons of free trade. Into the middle of the night we argued, with the Liberals saying that free trade was going to kill Canada, that it was going to take away our sovereignty, our water, all our assets.

From that time I remember a then new member of parliament in the Liberal Party, a member who is now their federal minister of agriculture and who used to stay in the same apartment I did. We walked home at one o'clock or two o'clock in the morning. As we were walking home one night, I said I wondered what would happen if our parties switched positions on free trade. In a very prophetic manner, the now minister of agriculture said that they would just stand up and argue the other way.

That is exactly what the Liberals are doing. We have not changed our position but the Liberals have certainly changed theirs. I do not think these flip-flops help our case as a country but we should not be surprised, because in that campaign the Liberals also promised to do away with the GST, the horrible tax. Suddenly when they were in power they said that perhaps it was not so bad and doubled it. In Atlantic Canada the GST went from 7% to 15% and the Liberals now call it the HST. This is the tax that they were going to tear up, that they were going to do away with. However, that is a flip-flop and that is okay.

Then of course there was the flip-flop on the ethics counsellor. The Liberals promised, in writing, to make the counsellor independent, and just two days ago all but two Liberal members voted against their own motion, against their promise to Canadians to establish an independent ethics counsellor.

These amazing reversals hurt the image of parliamentarians and are part of the reason why people do not hold parliamentarians or politicians in general in high esteem. In fact, if people in the private sector made promises and commitments like this and did not honour them they would not survive. Somehow this party does.

Speaking of flip-flops, the Reform Party also made some pretty strong promises in their former campaigns. One of those promises was that Reform members were going to bring new decorum to the House of Commons. Of course we know what they brought to the

House, and that was mariachi bands. They were going to do away with Stornoway and maybe turn it into a bingo hall, but I suggest that we check and see who the inhabitant is at Stornoway now.

The ultimate flip-flop is one which I felt personally in 1993. I was defeated in 1993 because the Conservative vote was split. The big argument then was the gold plated pension plan. Of course we know they have now flip-flopped on that and have adopted the gold plated pensions.

Yesterday their only appointed senator moved a motion that he take over the Senate opposition party and be the official opposition. This is from an Alliance Party that is totally opposed to the Senate and especially to appointed senators. Now their only appointed senator wants to take it over. It is incredible.

A lot of people talk about Brian Mulroney, what he did and what his track record was, but I want to point out that Brian Mulroney and the Conservatives said that if Canadians voted for them they would bring them free trade. Whether Canadians liked it or not is not the issue. He made a commitment and he followed through on the commitment. He said that if Canadians voted Conservative he would bring in free trade, and he did. He said that if people voted for the Conservatives he would change the manufacturers' sales tax, and he did that.

● (1215)

This was in contrast to the Liberals who said that if Canadians voted for them they would tear up free trade. They did not tear it up; they enhanced it. They also told Canadians to vote for them and they would do away with the GST. They did not do away with it; they doubled it. Those flip-flops and reversals of position are very harmful to all of us, and the government should try to be more consistent.

Let us get back to the opposition motion, which we as a party agree with. Perhaps we should not need the motion. Under normal terms and former times we would not need the motion. However this all falls into line with the many calls for parliamentary reform. If we could go back to former days when parliamentarians actually had a say on issues, when we had input in committees and in the House of Commons and a say on policy, then we would not need to have opposition days and probably would not have it.

We agree with the motion because we have no other input into bills. We are not against free trade at all. The Conservative Party brought free trade to the country and to the government. We do not want to stop it. We do not want to tie the hands of officials. However every member here has different challenges, different cultures and different situations. Every member of parliament should have a say in an agreement as important as the free trade agreement.

Part of the problem is simple things like committees. In former times committees were made of up members of parliament who

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actually had a say and had input. We could influence policy and direction. However, in all the committees with which I was involved in the last parliament they were totally an arm of the minister. The chair was decided by the minister. The subjects for discussion were determined by the minister. The votes were controlled by the ministers. The parliamentary secretary was always there to tell the Liberals how to vote and they always did exactly what they were told.

One of the Liberal members who was a former teacher said that the committee system reminded him of kindergarten, where teachers create busy work to keep the students busy. That was his vision of a committee: busy work, something to keep members of parliament busy. If members had the power to choose our chair, choose our own subjects and have free votes in committees, we could actually do a lot of good work and would not have to have opposition days like today.

I have no confidence in the Liberal Party to negotiate the free trade agreement of the Americas. First, the Liberal Party was totally against free trade. How can a party that is totally against free trade establish a concept that is viable and workable? If the party is against it, how can it do that? It creates all kinds of questions when members of a party, who were totally against the trade policy in a former life, turn around and say that everyone should stay out if it, that it should be left up to them because they will do it and do it right. This creates a lot of problems for me.

The Liberals have not been very successful at trade agreements lately. I want to bring up a couple of examples. Certainly the ban on Brazilian beef and the way that was handled will turn out to be a major embarrassment to our country and our government. For two years officials at Health Canada said that they thought there might be a problem but that they could not get information. They did not do anything about it, even though for two years they thought there might be a problem with mad cow disease potentially coming to Canada through Brazilian beef.

Strangely enough, the day after the Canadian government learned that the Brazilian government was taking the issue of the aviation industry to the WTO, it imposed a ban on Brazilian beef. For two years the Liberal government did nothing about the beef issue, but when something happened at the WTO that it did not like it brought in the ban.

Again there was no consultation with the House or with the committees. The government just brought in the very significant ban on Brazilian beef which will impact on all Canadian trade to Brazil.

There are now demonstrations all through Brazil. Ships are tied up. Ships that are on the ocean cannot unload because of the Brazilian beef ban, which was not handled properly. Proper notice

*Supply*

was not given. Parliament was not consulted. No committees were advised. The government just did it and no questions were asked.

There either was a health risk for two years that the government did nothing about, or the ban on Brazilian beef is strictly a trade issue. However, it is an example of how not to handle a trade issue.

• (1220)

Another example, which has not yet happened but which is in incubation, is the softwood lumber issue. This is incredibly important for Canada. There are 337 communities where 50% of the economy, the lifeblood of the community, depends on the forestry industry. It is a critical issue yet right now the government is in limbo on it.

We do not know whether it will ask the government of the United States to renew the softwood agreement, whether it will let it go to free trade or whether the memorandum of understanding for the Atlantic provinces will be renewed, continued or what. We are in total limbo. There have been no consultations and no information. We do not know which way the government is going. Again, there has been no consultation or involvement of MPs on such a critical issue.

There will be a tremendous effort by the American industry to put countervail charges and tariffs on Canadian lumber on March 31 when the softwood lumber agreement ends, yet we have no idea what will take its place.

I have a few questions on the softwood lumber issue for the parliamentary secretary if he has the opportunity to answer them. I would like to know what the government's position is on the memorandum of understanding for Atlantic Canada. I would like to know if we are as a government trying to renew the softwood lumber agreement. I would like to know if the government will include all the parties involved, like the Maritime Lumber Bureau, in every step of the negotiations.

These are just some examples of what I call failed trade negotiations. It does not give me a lot of confidence in that group over there to negotiate a new free trade agreement of the Americas.

The Conservatives are fundamentally in favour of free trade. It was our concept in the first place. We brought it to Canada, against strong opposition at the time. We are in favour of it. However we also know that every province and every industrial sector has to be involved with the negotiations all the way through.

We are, after all, a major trading nation. Forty-six per cent of our GDP comes from exports, as opposed to countries like the United States that are at 11%. Our export trade amounts to \$2.2 billion every single day. Exports affect our standard of living, our culture and our position of influence in the world. It has to be done right.

World trading blocks are changing as well. We have to keep up to date with other parts of the world like the European community which is now trading as a bloc and not country to country. It does not trade as Germany, France or Italy but as a bloc, a continent, a uniform group. We must adapt to that. That is why we support the principle of the free trade agreement of the Americas but we must be consultation with MPs, and the committee has to have information available to it and be able to influence the decision and direction.

It is not only about money and it is not only about business. The free trade agreement of the Americas will be of great concern to a lot of Canadians in a lot of areas. Many Canadians are concerned about our water, about human rights in other countries, about environmental standards and rules in other countries and about health standards. All these issues can be discussed as part of the free trade of the Americas if it is done right.

We want to make sure that is part of it. We want to make sure the committee is open to these subjects and is able to bring in witnesses that have strong opinions on all aspects of the free trade agreement. We will be pushing for that in committee. We want all subjects on the table. We want all the MPs involved with the debate as well as members of the provincial legislatures and each industrial sector.

Once the agreement is signed it cannot be changed. There are 34 countries involved. We can hardly get a decision by one government here to change, much less by 34 governments. Therefore it must be done in advance. That is why the opposition day is so valuable.

We do support free trade and we support the motion to bring the debate to the House prior to ratification.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, let me take the opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment to the chair.

I listened with some interest to my colleague's comments and, indeed, he is right. I confess to be one of those who in 1988 was extremely dubious about free trade and whether it would be good for Canada. Clearly it has been. That is very evident.

• (1225)

That is why the government, most Canadians and most parliamentarians support free trade, with the exception of members of the NDP whose position everybody knows before they even speak on it. They support it because they know it is good for the Canadian economy. They know it will help eradicate poverty, as the United Nations has recently pointed out.

The hon. member says that he and his party agree with the Bloc motion. However, in citing the example of 1988, how can he now



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support a process which is not what the Mulroney government of the day followed? Our proposed process is the same as the one used by that government of the day. It includes a full review of the enabling legislation open to debate and open to opportunities for amendment. That is how change would come.

How could the member support a process which is so radically different from that which his own government followed in 1988?

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Madam Speaker, I thank the parliamentary secretary for his excellent questions and for the comment that he did listen with some interest to my words. I also acknowledge that I appreciate him saying now that he agrees with Brian Mulroney's policy. It is good for Liberal members to say they agree with Brian Mulroney's policy, that they were wrong and Brian Mulroney was right.

Recently the very distinguished Minister of Industry, who is very influential, said the same. He now agrees with Brian Mulroney, that Brian Mulroney was right and they were wrong. It was refreshing to hear that.

If the parliamentary secretary listened to my speech he will know that I asked questions about the government and its support for the memorandum of understanding on the softwood lumber agreement for Atlantic Canada. I wonder if he supports that. If he gets another chance to stand I would like him to answer that and to state exactly what is the position of the government on the softwood agreement.

To answer his question, we had the ultimate consultation. The parliamentary secretary challenged me to suggest that we would follow the same process. I challenge him to follow the same process and hold an election entirely on free trade like we did in 1988. If he follows the process I will be right there with him and will run against him, and we will see how it works out. That was our process, the ultimate consultation. We consulted with every Canadian who could vote.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien:** Madam Speaker, I congratulate my colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party on his re-election to the House and on his appointment as trade critic for his party.

If memory serves, on November 27 the government was resoundingly re-elected by Canadians. The Canadian public knows full well what our position is on free trade and what it has been since we have been in office. I submit to my colleague that he had his answer very clearly from the Canadian people, that they support the initiatives of the government vis-à-vis free trade and many other initiatives we have undertaken.

With respect to his question on softwood lumber, I have addressed it a couple of times in the House but am happy to reiterate

it for him now. The government is very clear that nobody in Canada wants to see the current deal extended or another deal such as the current one struck again.

The ultimate goal of the Canadian government on softwood lumber is very clear: free trade in lumber with the United States. Why? It is the surest way to achieve fairness for all the provinces and for all Canadians involved in the lumber business.

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Madam Speaker, I appreciate the member's question. As to why the Liberals were re-elected, I cannot answer that question. I do not understand why.

He says that everyone in Canada knows our position on free trade. I do not think that is right. I do not think they know. I do not think they know the government's position on a lot of things, like the softwood lumber issue or the national missile defence system.

I do not know why they were re-elected. It is a puzzle to me and certainly I do not think Canadians know where the government stands on hardly anything.

• (1230)

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I am pleased to jump in at this point having listened to the exchange between the Conservatives and the Liberals, both of whom I think bear a great deal of culpability for the dire consequences and side effects of the free trade approach by the federal government.

Whether we are talking about the Conservatives, who really pioneered NAFTA, or the Liberals, who were quick to break their campaign promise and proceed holus-bolus with adherence to NAFTA, the fact of the matter is that we have been left with a serious threat to our sovereignty and to our ability to control our own destiny insofar as we are dealing with the critical issues of universal public health care, education and other social services.

It is well known that in all cases, whether we are talking about FTA, NAFTA or now the free trade areas of the Americas agreement, and also whether we are concluding MAI and all the discussions at the WTO level, the bottom line seems to be to open up an area that is very lucrative in terms of trade, that being the health care sector of our economy.

How can my hon. Conservative colleague continue to defend this general direction in terms of trade knowing full well that our ability to protect our public health care system is threatened and knowing full well that as we sit and talk about the FTAA there are discussions proceeding around GATS and a very deliberate effort to

*Supply*

include all social services in the area of globalization, free trade and the trading of public health for private wealth?

I see my colleague from the Liberal Party, the parliamentary secretary, shaking his head. There is no shortage of documentation to verify this threat and certainly no shortage of legal opinion to recognize the precarious position for health care as a result of these trade deals and all of these trade discussions.

As we look at the FTAA we have to be very wary about the real agenda behind it all and address it accordingly. This is not just from people in the NDP, people on the left or people on the Council of Canadians, we are also talking about reputable journals like the *The Lancet*, a medical journal which came out in December with an editorial entitled "Trading public health for private wealth". It gave a very significant analysis of discussions at the WTO level around how our ability as a country to preserve publicly administered universal accessible health care is threatened.

That is my question to the member. If I could get an answer from the parliamentary secretary I would love it, but I will wait my turn.

**Mr. Bill Casey:** Madam Speaker, I have better answers anyway. I appreciate the NDP member's position but I want to make it really clear that the restoration and protection of health care is the number one priority of this party. There is not one member of parliament here who does not deal with people in need every day. We understand and are concerned about the social services that are necessary to help people who really need help. Every one of us is involved in that every day and that is a very important issue for us.

However, the bottom line is that if we did not have those 46% of our gross domestic product as exports or trade agreements that allowed us to have 46% of our gross domestic product shipped and sold to other countries, we would have no health care system and no money for social services. There has to be a balance between the two. I believe that with free trade agreements around the world we can protect our health care and social services more than in any other way.

[*Translation*]

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis, BQ):** Madam Speaker, today, the Bloc Québécois put forward, for debate in the House, a motion that reads as follows:

That this House demand that the government bring any draft agreement on the Free Trade Zone of the Americas before the House so that it may be debated and put to a vote before ratification by the Government of Canada.

• (1235)

We have proposed this motion for several reasons, but I believe the main one is the lack of real trust between the government and the civil society, the government and opposition parties.

Unfortunately, as I have often said in my speeches, once bitten, twice shy. We must judge this government on its behaviour. I recall that during our second mandate, only a few days before we had a situation created by the MAI, the famous multilateral agreement on investment, we were gathered in a room on the first floor, on the Senate side. There, we had the great honour of receiving the secretary general of the OECD, Mr. Johnston, a Liberal who has served the government here and who was rewarded by being appointed to the highly prestigious position of secretary general of the OECD.

He was with us to talk about this famous agreement. I recall a sentence which struck me and which most of all shocked me. He said "It is up to us, the officials, to negotiate. You do not have to negotiate. Once the agreement is completely negotiated and signed, we will come back to explain it to you. It will then be up to you to sell it".

These may not be the exact words used by the secretary general but it is, in substance, what he told us. He said to us "Do not bother with this. It is not up to you. Your role is to sell it after".

What became of the MAI? Without the courage of the French government, and without Internet, which the members across the aisle have been praising since this morning, the agreement would probably have been signed. Most fortunately it was not. I recall some statements, like this one from the former president of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the French National Assembly, Mr. Jack Lang, who said about the MAI negotiations "I do not know who is negotiating what and on whose behalf". This is what he said about the MAI, which had already been under negotiation for two years.

I do not know who is negotiating what and on whose behalf". We are probably in the same situation at the moment. Who is negotiating what and on behalf of whom to create the free trade area of the Americas? We know nothing about it.

We were told to look on the Internet, where we would find everything. I went on the Internet. I found all sorts of things on NAFTA, but nothing about what is going on at the moment.

And yet, when the Minister for International Trade, our government's homing pigeon, attended the October 1, 1999 meeting of the WTO, he said:

Canada proposes that ministers, in Seattle, commit themselves to enhancing the transparency of the WTO, so that secretariat working papers, formal contributions from members, draft meeting agendas and minutes will be circulated, with very limited exceptions, as unrestricted documents as soon as available in all three WTO languages.



A government minister said greater transparency was required. We have been calling for this since this morning. We want more transparency from this government. We want to be able to debate the agreement in this House, before it is ratified.

● (1240)

We do not want to be informed about all sorts of details that will be discussed at every meeting, subgroup, committee or subcommittee. We are asking the government to do its job. It has a mandate. We support the creation of the free trade area of the Americas, but the government has to do its job properly. At one point, it will have to report to us and to explain what it has done, before it is too late.

The Mulroney government, as was pointed out several times this morning, showed much courage when it had to face the stubbornness of the opposition of the day, which is now the government. It called a general election, even though, at that point, it only had the support of 19% of the voters, according to the polls. Everyone predicted that the Mulroney government would be soundly defeated.

Then they began talking about free trade. They organized forums. They held real debates. We had a taste of what democracy was like in Canada, instead of having to face the hypocrisy and the pretence of democracy that have existed since 1993. The government does everything behind our backs and always presents us with a *fait accompli*. We never get an answer to any question asked in the House. The government always evades the issue. It always says that the opposition does not understand, or know anything or know how to read.

The government, all of a sudden, has all the brains. It refuses to answer. Democracy is not doing well in this country. It is very important that we all agree on this issue.

We all know what happened with MAI. We must look at another point—raised by my colleague from the Progressive Conservative Party—the events relating to mad cow disease and Brazil.

If we pay close attention to what the minister is saying, one would be tempted to stand up and say “Excuse us, Mr. Minister, we should congratulate you on the fine job you are doing”. That is not the reality, however. If the situation is looked at more closely, we see that the Canadian Food Inspection Agency has just been given a “blast”, forgive my English, by the auditor general, which is a clear illustration of the terrible mess that agency is in.

The agency has received a knockout blow. The auditor general has said it is incompetent, is understaffed, is not doing its work. He also said it was in league with the industry. The industry had reached the stage of checking its own food production. Not the agency, which lacked both funds and staff.

### *Supply*

The minister was not too pleased at this situation. He wondered what he could do to improve the image of the agency. So he calls them up to inquire “Could you maybe turn up a mad cow or two somewhere?” He is told “Well yes, one in Brazil. Maybe”. Brazil is a long way from here and is the only country in America in which Portuguese is spoken.

The languages of the WTO are French, English and Spanish, whereas the language of Brazil is Portuguese. They refused to reply to our questionnaire. We have no information. Brazil, poor Brazil, has a population of 160 million. It is the second largest country in America in terms of population, and third largest in terms of area.

As far as our economy is concerned, Brazil is an important trading partner. So what do they do? We announced that Brazilian beef was banned. Finally the agency has an improved image, it is doing its job at last. I could continue for a very long time, but you have just indicated to me that I have only seconds left. I must state in closing that we have grounds for concern about the lack of transparency of this government.

**Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, “I do not know who is negotiating what and on whose behalf”, said Mr. Lang when the MAI was discussed; that is a good quote. Does it apply to the present situation?

I know, so to speak, the answer to the question. This is the responsibility of the government, which was recently elected by a vast majority of Canadians and which is negotiating on the basis of the principles circulated on the Internet for everyone to see. It is negotiating with the help of the civil society here in Canada and elsewhere.

● (1245)

It is negotiating on behalf of all the people of Canada, who will benefit from an extension of markets and the creation of prosperity throughout all the Americas.

Could the hon. member for Rimouski—Neigette-et-la Mitis tell me whether Quebecers agree with her and whether they are against free trade? Or am I wrong when I say to her that, in my opinion, the people of Quebec favour free trade, profit from it, and want to participate and not be hemmed in by an attitude like the hon. member’s?

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay:** Madam Speaker, first, I did not say that I was opposed to free trade. In fact, if Mr. Mulroney won the election in 1988 it is thanks, among others, to Quebecers, because we supported free trade.

We were not like the Liberals who said “We are opposed to free trade”. They said it again in 1993. I clearly remember the Prime Minister saying “I will never sign this agreement unless major

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changes are made". The Prime Minister later took off, almost in secret, and travelled to western Canada, thought things over and said "Perhaps I should sign that agreement. It will cause a lot less problems".

So, all of a sudden, he called back the same negotiator and told him "Explain the agreement to me again. I did not clearly understand what you meant the first time". Once the Prime Minister clearly understood the agreement, he signed it with very minor changes. I am not even sure those changes made the headlines, because the changes requested by the Prime Minister were so minor.

We support free trade. But who is negotiating right now? Members should not come and tell me it is the Minister for International Trade who is at the table negotiating. There are people negotiating. Where is the list of negotiators? What issues is the government negotiating? Where is the agenda? Where are the documents used as a basis for negotiating? What is Canada's position in these negotiations?

We do not know the government's position and it is not true that it can be found on the Internet. This morning, my assistant surfed the net and we could not find anything on Canada's position. If a negotiation session were to take place here right now, what would the government say? The government is keeping its position secret and wants to put before members of parliament a *fait accompli*.

Why is civil society complaining about the fact that it was not consulted? Once again, the government consulted its own groups, namely those who contributed to its campaign coffers. They will say what it wants to hear. We are fed up with the government's lack of democracy and lack of transparency.

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Madam Speaker, considering the importance of the issue, could we ask ourselves certain questions without being labelled anti-free trade?

Personally, I am for free trade but, as a citizen and consumer, I have the right to ask questions and to get answers. In what kind of system are we living? Is it a democracy or not? Why is it that every time we stand up to ask questions, the people across the way say that we are against whatever the subject of the debate is, when all we want is some clarification? We want to know what is going on. These are questions that our fellow citizens ask us in our riding.

Since my distinguished colleague has some experience in the House of Commons, I would ask her what we can do to get the answers to the questions and concerns our constituents raise? It is healthy to have concerns. It is not that these people are against free trade, but they want to know what we are getting into. With her experience, could my colleague tell me how we could get the answers we need?

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay:** Madam Speaker, my answer will be short. We could follow the example of the government and go get these answers on the Internet. The problem is that three quarters of the population do not have access to Internet at the moment.

• (1250)

The Internet is not readily accessible in rural areas and there are many rural areas in Canada. We even have a secretary of state in charge of this famous issue.

I agree with my colleague from Champlain. We must be concerned with the lack of democracy, the lack of access to information and the absence of answers to our questions.

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I congratulate the member for Joliette on his very timely motion in the House today calling for debate and a vote before any agreement on the free trade area of the Americas is ratified. The riding of Québec will be hosting the Summit of the Americas.

I would like to remind members that politicians in Quebec, sovereignist and federalist alike, have always supported free trade, unlike the Liberal Party of Canada, which earlier opposed it.

The 148.6% increase in Quebec's exports to the United States between 1991 and 1998 are testimony to the wisdom of opening up trade. But we must look beyond the apparent success of these figures, and take the time to analyse the real impact these agreements will have on workers, and particularly on their quality of life.

These gains must be kept in perspective. Some workers continue to lose ground. More and more people are earning the minimum wage, without benefits. There is also an increase in the number of jobs without security and atypical jobs.

This is why the Bloc Québécois is calling for some form of social protection, and is concerned about what is being negotiated behind the scenes. It wants the gulf between rich and poor to stop growing, and it wants to see the growth in exports accompanied by a decrease in poverty and benefits for all classes of society.

We are particularly concerned when we know that the minister who will be at the negotiating table, the current Minister for International Trade, once said that social rights have nothing to do with trade. That is why the Bloc Québécois is worried. It cannot do the work of all the ministers. We have reason to be worried.

Although the Bloc Québécois is keenly interested in globalization and is in fact favourable to a liberalization of trade, it also shares the worries and the hopes of the public. The Bloc Québécois considers that this liberalization must not come at the expense of cultural diversity or social rights, whether through the WTO or the free trade area of the Americas.

My colleagues have talked and will talk abundantly about the importance of addressing social rights and other concerns with

respect to the FTAA negotiations. Those are legitimate concerns that are very important to me, but in the few minutes I have I will stick to one aspect, which relates specifically to my responsibilities as heritage critic, and that is how culture ought to be treated.

No one can talk about international trade agreements without thinking about cultural issues. The recent defeat of Canada on the magazine issue is a harsh reminder in that regard. We have great confidence in the ability of our cultural artisans to carve for themselves a place in Quebec as well as in the whole world.

We hope that the conclusion of a trade agreement for the Americas will result in even more extensive cultural exchanges between Quebec and Latin American countries.

So, why worry, some would say. Because Quebec culture did not develop all on its own. The Government of Quebec used its response authority to support its development and growth. That approach was taken by every Quebec government regardless of its political stripe.

It must be recalled that Quebec interventions have been conceived and implemented in order to offset deficiencies in the market environment and to allow for the development of a domestic culture.

That is why we are recommending that any trade agreement preserve any present or future response capability of the Quebec government. The right of governments to adopt policies of support for creators, creation and also distribution must be recognized.

Even more important, cultural diversity is an international asset that should be recognized and protected by an international charter.

• (1255)

Our culture is not totally isolated. The summary report on multi-stakeholder consultations on the General Agreement on Trade in Services, released last week by the Minister for International Trade, provides, under the heading "Autonomy for Self-Governing Bodies":

Participants feared that policies favouring local hiring, or encouraging cultural sensitivity in the delivery of services, might be compromised.

This fear is all the more justified since, despite the fact that the federal government is stating loud and clear that it supports cultural protection, Cabinet cannot agree on the stand to take.

The Prime Minister of Canada is saying that the question of cultural diversity is a matter for the WTO, and the Minister of Canadian Heritage would prefer that the matter be debated at UNESCO.

In an article in the *National Post* on November 20 entitled "The Conversion of Sergio Marchi", journalist Murray Dobbie passes on the disturbing words of Canada's representative to the WTO.

### *Supply*

According to this journalist, the former minister said that education and teaching could be covered by the next agreements.

However, another summary report on multi-stakeholder consultations with respect to the General Agreement on Trade in Services provides that:

The Government of Canada will not make any commitment that restricts our ability to achieve our cultural policy objectives until a new international instrument can be established designed specifically to safeguard the right of countries to promote and preserve their cultural diversity.

And so, what is this government's true position on culture? Is it that of the Prime Minister or that of the Minister of Canadian Heritage? What is the real intent of the government? The words reported by Mr. Marchi or the summary report released last week by the Minister for International Trade? Could someone in government set the record straight?

Culture means words. It involves the choices we make to express who we are, what we experience, how we feel and what we want to become. These words are conveyed by language, painting, song, film, radio, television, clay modelling and marble polishing. They are conveyed by pictures, etchings, theatre, in a word, by the passion and genius of our artisans, who sketch in broad strokes our daily lives, as witnesses to and tireless participants in our history.

This is why it is so important for us to jealously protect and parsimoniously share the culture of a people.

As Gilles Vigneault put it in his song:

With our words, our games, our work and our dance, our joys and our sorrows too, four hundred years of faith, love and hope with those who lived here, our mirrors and our differences, we have become this people and this country.

It is because of all these emotions and this wealth of day to day experience that we do not want culture reduced to a consumer good like the others. We must not forget that it gives life to a people as they are and that we are here to speak in our own way, in the manner of each people.

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis-et-Chutes-de-la-Chaudière, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate the hon. member for Québec on the quality of her speech and particularly on what she said about the impact the free trade agreement presently being negotiated by all countries in the three Americas will have on the cultural sector.

For me and for the other members from the Quebec City area, Lévis being situated just on the other side of the river from Quebec City, the fact that the summit will be held in Quebec City raises a number of concerns as far as security and the potential for demonstrations are concerned. I imagine that those concerns are raised in her riding more than anywhere else, since this is where the summit will be held. I would like her to tell us about it, if she wishes to do so.

*Supply*

Since she too is from the Quebec City area, I would like to take the opportunity to emphasize that the shipbuilding sector has been overlooked or excluded from the free trade agreement. This sector was also overlooked in the amendments that were made when Mexico joined in.

● (1300)

Residents of Quebec City and the north shore who work at the shipyard in Lévis are now wondering why this exception was made.

I understand that, during the last negotiations, for the auto pact, it was taken into consideration in order to protect the interests of southern Ontario, and of the United States.

Now we are taking things to the next level, the Americas. I know that several countries, Brazil and South America in particular, want to get ships and oil drilling rigs built by Canadian shipyards among others. So, that does have an impact.

I would like to know where the hon. member stands on this issue. As the member for Québec, is she prepared to support me so that shipbuilding and maritime transport are included in the future free trade agreement?

I also find unacceptable that Quebec City will be footing the bill if demonstrations are held during the Summit of the Americas. As of today, we still do not know for sure if the premier of Quebec will take part in the Summit of the Americas. As far as I know, and I could be wrong, he was only invited to a cocktail party. That is rather odd.

I would like to know what the hon. member for Québec thinks about all of this.

**Ms. Christiane Gagnon:** Madam Speaker, indeed, the Summit of the Americas will be held in the riding of Québec.

We hope that the Government of Canada will respond to the financial expectations relating to the holding of the summit in order to allay the concerns of the Government of Quebec and the municipality of Québec.

We know that requests have been made for the funds necessary to ensure that all the infrastructure required to provide a proper welcome for the leaders of other countries is in place. We trust that there will be a follow up and that the requests for assistance from the Government of Quebec and the municipality of Québec will be met with a suitable response. At the present time, we do not know if there has been any follow up to the requests made by the two levels of government.

As for the other matter of the shipyard, this was an election issue in the riding of Lévis and the reason the hon. member for Lévis was re-elected.

We still await a proper shipbuilding development policy here in Canada. This would have a positive impact on Quebec, particularly Lévis. Any protection afforded the industry would have a positive impact on the economic development of Quebec and a regional ripple effect extending beyond Lévis, because a number of workers reside in the various ridings in the Quebec City area.

We can only regret the slowness with which the federal government is handling this matter. They claim to be very concerned about the economy, yet it is important to provide assistance and support to the economic levers and the various infrastructures already in place in order to be able to compete the global marketplace in the future.

The Summit of the Americas is very important. It is important to know how much protection there will be for the social rights of our workers in a number of precarious sectors of economic activity in Canada and in Quebec.

[English]

**Hon. Elinor Caplan (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, it is a pleasure to participate in the debate. I will be sharing my time with the hon. member for Toronto Centre—Rosedale.

The Americas is one of the most dynamic regions in the world. With its 800 million people, even though we are not but one-sixth of the world's population, we account for more than one-third of the world's total economic activity.

● (1305)

At about \$11 trillion U.S., the combined gross domestic product of the Americas is greater than that of the European Union. No wonder then that leaders of the western hemisphere believed in the potential of the Americas. They knew that their countries could work together more effectively on every front, social, political and economic, to promote democracy, development and growth.

At the Miami summit of the Americas in 1994, leaders endorsed a declaration and a plan of action that expressed their common commitment to strengthening democracy and creating even greater prosperity. They also committed themselves to practical measures to improve health care, increase access to quality education, protect biodiversity, collective action against such scourges as drugs and corruption, and expanding and deepening dialogue with civil society on regional priorities.

At the second summit in Santiago in 1998, this co-operation was carried forward in detail. Once again leaders endorsed action to support the development of democratic institutions, protection of human rights, and enhanced transparency and respect for the rule of law. They gave specific instructions to begin the process of negotiating the free trade areas of the Americas.

Once it is completed, the FTAA will be the world's largest free trade area. In short, the summit of the Americas process offers



numerous opportunities to further enhance Canada's openness to the world and to the western hemisphere in particular.

The FTAA is one of the tangible opportunities on the economic front, with its potential for enhanced market access for Canadian exports. If there is one sector where new access could lead to significant benefits for Canada and Canadian businesses, it is in the service sector.

The service sector is a key engine of Canada's economy. It is responsible for more than two-thirds of Canada's GDP, almost three-quarters of our employment with 10.5 million people and nearly 90% of new job creation in Canada. It is leading the transformation of the Canadian economy into a knowledge based economy.

Many employees in the service sector are highly educated and enjoy well above average earnings. Services are at the heart of Canada's innovation. For example, communications, financial services and technical business services are among the most innovative industries in Canada. We are a world leader.

As a trading nation Canada counts on its service exports to strengthen our prosperity. Not counting Canada's direct investment abroad in service companies, Canada is the 12th largest exporter of services in the world, exporting \$51.8 billion in 1999 alone. Canadian companies like SNC-Lavalin, Teleglobe, Enbridge and Hydro Quebec are among world leaders in their field and their expertise is sought across the hemisphere.

Service exports only account for 12% of total Canadian exports. Canada's trade in services is increasing at a much faster pace than our trade in goods and shows tremendous potential. Given the importance of trade in our economy, we could say without fear of exaggeration that improving market access for our service providers abroad is vital to sustaining our prosperity.

The argument for supporting Canada's service exports is particularly eloquent when it comes to the Americas. Canada's commercial service exports to the FTAA countries, including the U.S. and Mexico, were worth about \$1.9 billion in 1998, up from under \$800 million in 1993, growing at an average annual rate of 19% during that period.

Countries such as Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Columbia and Brazil are all key existing or potential export markets for Canadian service providers.

• (1310)

I draw the attention of the House to three sectors in particular: telecommunications, financial services and engineering services, all of which are found in the greater Toronto area, some in my riding of Thornhill, and right across the country.

The Canadian telecommunications sector is enjoying tremendous success exporting services valued at over \$2 billion each year

### *Supply*

and employing some 104,000 Canadians. As a consequence, since 1993 the sector has been growing at a rate of just over 9% per year.

Canadian exporters of telecommunication services still face market access and regulatory restrictions in many countries of the hemisphere, in part due to the presence of telecommunication monopolies in several Central and Latin American countries; the lack of transparency, predictability and timeliness in the process of awarding operating permits and licences; or prohibitive fees for licences and interconnection. This hurts our businesses. Reducing such barriers would significantly increase export opportunities for Canada's growing telecommunication companies.

In recent years Canada's financial institutions have been very active in Central and Latin America. We have a number of examples. Scotiabank is active in Argentina and Chile. In fact in Chile it is the seventh largest bank. In El Salvador, Scotiabank has 33 branches in that country alone, but it is also active in Brazil, Costa Rica, Belize, Guyana, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela.

Another good example is the National Bank which recently teamed up with three U.S. venture capital companies and a local Chilean partner to form the CorpBanca consortium to purchase banking institutions in South American countries.

The same is true for our insurance sector. Our life and health insurance companies have identified Latin America as a growth market for the future.

Another sector where Canadian expertise is renowned is in the world of engineering and other related services. Canada is currently the third largest exporter of engineering services. The high calibre of Canadian engineers is internationally recognized.

Business opportunities are significant especially in Central and Latin America where the expertise of Canadian engineers in resource based and energy related as well as infrastructure projects is in high demand.

In this regard Hydro-Quebec's recent acquisition of Chile's Transelec, which owns 50% of the Chilean power transmission lines, is a good example of the type of business opportunities in the countries the western hemisphere have to offer.

That is why Canada is pursuing and actively participating in the service negotiations under the free trade area of the Americas. Canada has much to gain from the establishment of a comprehensive set of rules in trade and services under FTAA. Canada's general objective in the service negotiations is to seek improved market access for Canadian service providers under a transparent and predictable rules based regime.

In the elaboration of FTAA rules on services Canada will be guided by its existing rights and obligations under NAFTA, the Canada-Chile free trade agreement and the WTO general agreement on trade and services.



*Supply*

Contrary to what some critics have said, these objectives could be achieved without putting at risk those things which all Canadians value and cherish. As is now the case in other trade agreements, the FTAA services chapter will allow countries to file exceptions for those measures they wish to maintain irrespective of some of the FTAA obligations. In addition, and this is extremely important, nothing in these negotiations will jeopardize our public health and our public education systems. They are simply not negotiable.

I have shown in my remarks how world competitive Canadian telecommunications, financial services and engineering services are, and that is only to name three sectors. I could go on and on, but I do want to share my time.

In conclusion, the countries of the western hemisphere could prosper as they learn to work together and be good economic partners with Canada and with each other.

• (1315)

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the minister made a very fine speech but she did not address the key message in the opposition day motion of the Bloc Quebecois which was demanding to see the actual text that is being negotiated on our behalf.

The crux of the matter is that negotiations are taking place behind closed doors. We have some assurances that certain things are not being negotiated but, frankly, we do not have a very good record to draw from in previous negotiations.

I will give one example. Most Canadians are reeling with shock and horror over spiralling home heating costs right now. When they go to their government and ask for some kind of relief, some kind of preferential pricing, the government tells them that it is sorry but it cannot do anything because it traded everything away in the last round of bargaining in the NAFTA agreement.

We traded away our economic sovereignty, which is what Canadians are afraid will happen again. What are we trading away this time? What is going on behind closed doors? Why can we not see the text of the document so that we could put people's minds at ease?

If in fact what the minister said is absolutely true, that Canada would never trade away certain things because we just would not do that, why did we willingly trade away our economic sovereignty in the area of energy pricing? There is a recent tangible experience that is still very bitter in the mouths of Canadians, especially now as they are opening their energy bills for their home heating oil.

Would the hon. minister explain the reluctance on her government's part to release the actual text of the negotiations so that the minds of Canadians can be put at ease.

**Hon. Elinor Caplan:** Madam Speaker, I would say to the member and to those to whom I have listened carefully that it is important to tell Canadians that they can access all of the information regarding Canada's position during these negotiations on the website. It is open, clear and there for all to see.

I do not think there has ever been a process that has been as open to encourage Canadians to participate and to be informed. The fearmongering and the rhetoric I have heard does a disservice to the important work that is being done to negotiate agreements that will benefit Canadian businesses and industries.

Anyone who has an interest can plug into the website, get the information and then let us know what they think about the position that the Government of Canada is taking. That is good government, that is openness, that is transparency and that is in the interests of all Canadians, particularly Canadians who want to prosper and have jobs for themselves, their children and future generations.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I commend the minister for putting forward her position on the trade issues. I know she is very well-versed on those as well as on several other issues in the House. As Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, she has a fair amount of authority and has used her authority to appoint several judges in the country, which is how it should be.

I know she is also very capable of rooting out bigots, racists and extremists. She made it very clear in the last election that she has those capabilities. It is always a very touchy subject when other people mention that topic but the minister does not seem to hold back when it comes to those particular issues when she is directing them across the floor.

The minister made a recent appointment of Mr. Sekora who was quoted in the Vancouver *Sun* on December 13 as blaming his loss specifically on members of B.C.—

**Mr. Pat O'Brien:** Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order. It is with reluctance that I interject and interrupt my colleague, but as the parliamentary secretary charged with organizing the debate, or trying to make sure that we have a full debate at least on this side, I am straining to understand any relevance whatsoever of the member's comments to the motion that is on the floor.

• (1320)

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** I think the Speaker has often shown a lot of latitude in terms of the type questions and comments that are made during questions and comments, but I ask the hon. member to get to the question because we have run out of time.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Madam Speaker, I will get to the question right now. The issues are Mr. Sekora and the appointment process

and what is deemed acceptable and not acceptable when accusations are hurled from the particular minister and in the way she makes her decisions.

Mr. Sekora said that his defeat was assured by 8,000 angry leaky condo owners in the riding and thousands more ethnic Asian voters who do not like to declare what they own and were upset over changes to foreign asset—

**The Acting Speaker (Ms. Bakopanos):** Would the hon. member put the question to the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

**Mr. Art Hanger:** Madam Speaker, is this the kind of person, I ask the minister, that she wants in her cabinet or in her arrangement of citizenship judges?

**Hon. Elinor Caplan:** Madam Speaker, I tell viewers who are watching the debate on the hemispheric free trade agreement that the question asked bears no relation to the debate whatever. However, I should like to say that the former member to whom the member opposite refers served as a member of his community for 28 years as a city councillor, school trustee and mayor, and honourably in this House. With that kind of community service, he is exactly the kind of individual to whom we are looking to serve our community in other capacities as well.

**Mr. Bill Graham (Toronto Centre—Rosedale, Lib.):** Madam Speaker, I am a little nervous to rise because I may find out I have made some appointment in my riding that the member opposite will choose to attack me on. I lack such power so I am sure I will be safe from any slings and arrows from the opposite side. I admit that I am culpable. I too have done things in life which I ought not to have done. There is no helping me, just like in the Anglican prayer book.

While we are passing to the subject matter of debate which I think members are interested in, I should like to address four issues we have been talking about in the House today.

The first is the consultation issue. The second is the merits of the FTAA. The third is one raised by the NDP regularly, which is the loss of sovereignty, and then I should like to talk about the merits of the particular motion.

On the consultation issue, we have heard a great deal this morning about the problems of consultation and the lack of it. Other members have addressed it, but I should like to speak to it from a different dimension. I should like to speak to it as someone who has sat on the foreign affairs committee and has been involved in international trade matters now for seven years of my parliamentary career. I frankly could say to the House, and I think most open-minded members would agree with me, that never before has there been a history of open consultation as much as there has been with the government on all these issues.

### *Supply*

Let us cast our minds back to the time when the MAI was a hot debate. What did we do? The government asked the international trade committee of the House to examine it, to report back to the House and to discuss it before the negotiations.

On this issue we hear: we do not know what we are seeing; this is all opaque; it is a big secret; and nobody knows what is going on. What did we have in the WTO report that the committee worked on last year? We had discussions about FTAA. Witnesses came from all over the country and discussed it with us. Members of the House discussed it. The subcommittee prepared a report on the FTAA, discussed it with members of the opposition and heard the public. The public has been engaged in consultations with the department for several years.

As has been pointed out, the negotiating positions are on the website. People can exchange points of view. There will be a parallel summit. I suggest to members in all honesty that there has never been as open a process. Members opposite that they be given the text of the agreement. They know that is not possible. They are experienced people. They have all been in business. They have all been in labour negotiations. They are all intelligent people.

• (1325)

They know and the public of Canada knows that when we go into a negotiation with 30 other countries, the 30 other countries have something to say as well. If they say that the agreement should not be released, we cannot release it against the will of our trading partners.

The Canadian government has shown a willingness to share the text of the agreement, but other governments have said no. Until the agreement is final we are not in a position to do so. I am confident that once the agreement is final, it will be open in Canada and open for discussion and review by members and others in the normal way.

The consultation process domestically has been extraordinary. In addition, internationally the Government of Canada has been at the forefront of bringing together an interparliamentary forum of the Americas. I am proud to say that it will be sitting in this Chamber when we break in the month of March.

In this very room we will have representatives, not governmental representatives but parliamentarians from all across the Americas: South America, Central America and the Caribbean countries. They will be sitting in this room discussing the issues we are discussing today: Will free trade in the Americas contribute to our prosperity; how do we preserve our environment, how do we preserve the diversity of our culture?

I hope all members of the House and all parties will be participating in this important debate launched by the Government of Canada as a recognition that these issues touch deeply our social programs. The issues of free trade and economic integration touch

*Supply*

us. They touch our daily lives and they touch the daily lives of other citizens throughout the Americas.

Do we wish to run away from them, as would be suggested by the NDP? Or, do we wish to embrace them in a positive way which will bring prosperity for all of the Americas, not just for ourselves but for everyone, and in a way which allows us to consult with everyone? That is what is happening in the area of consultation.

I urge members opposite who are interested in this issue to speak to their whips and get involved. They should find out about the interparliamentary forum which will sit here and participate in these discussions, not just with us but with democratically elected representatives from all of the Americas, all of whom share our preoccupations and our concerns about this agreement.

The minister's point is excellent. The agreement is bringing prosperity. If we did not have international trade, we would not have the city of Toronto of today. It is entirely dependent upon it. It is dependent upon it in the financial services sector, in the mining industry and in practically every area of economic life of the city I am very proud to represent in a riding I treasure.

Members know that 40% of our GDP is dependent on exports. Some 25% or 30% is dependent on imports. I can say to every one of my citizens, as I walk down the streets of my riding, that about 60 cents of every dollar in their pockets are somehow related to the trade in which the country is engaged. They know that.

We are trying to craft the best agreement we can. We are doing that and we are trying to bring in other foreign countries to enable them to share in our prosperity. I suggest that is a generous thing we ought to be doing.

We could focus on other issues. Our colleagues in the NDP, the Bloc and the Alliance are no different from the colleagues on our side of the House. We are all concerned about the environment, human rights, labour standards, diversity of culture, the distribution of wealth and equity.

That is what we do. We are politicians. We are in the business of trying to make sure that society is an harmonious operating system. That is what will be done at the level of the Americas. That is what this engagement is all about. It is an exciting, dynamic and wonderful opportunity. One of the great opportunities is the free trade area of the Americas.

As members will recall we did a study of the WTO, a great institution, in committee on it last year before going into the famous negotiations in Seattle and found that it is grappling with these problems on a global scale.

The FTAA allows us to grapple with these problems on the scale of the Americas. We will be able to deal with human rights, for

example, with our colleagues in the Americas because the FTAA is only one part of the negotiations that will take place at the summit of the Americas.

• (1330)

The Prime Minister will not only be speaking to trade agreements with the other leaders of the Americas. He will be speaking to strengthening democracy and to good governance in all our countries. He will be speaking to issues of social justice and equity in our countries. He will be speaking to issues of human rights.

Let us not pretend that because the FTAA is there we do not have a framework for human rights in the Americas. In this hemisphere there are dozens of forums for discussing human rights. There is the OAS general assembly, the Inter-American Human Rights Commission, the inter-American court, and working groups on human rights. Canada is engaged in all of these groups. We actively participate in them. The FTAA will enable us to get a better handle on these groups and to work with our trading partners in the Americas to advance those causes. Why would we stand in its way if we believe in that?

This morning I had the opportunity to meet with a very interesting group called the sustainable cities initiative. This group of Canadians is bringing cities together with private industry to go to developing countries and work with them on environmental concerns in their cities.

Where are the contracts they are doing at the moment? They are in Salvador, Brazil; San José, Costa Rica; Cordoba, Argentina; and Valparaiso, Chile. Why? It is because these are countries of the Americas. They are logical places that small and medium size businesses can work with and link with, as we create a matrix throughout the Americas that deals with human rights, culture and economics on a mutually advantageous system. That is what this is all about. That is what the debate should be about, instead of what I hear from the NDP over and over again about our loss of sovereignty.

How have we lost our sovereignty? These agreements are entered into by freely elected democratic governments. The sovereign will of the Government of Canada, elected by the people of Canada, chooses to go into the agreement.

For example, would members of the NDP rip up the Kyoto agreement because we lost our sovereignty by entering into it? No. They like the Kyoto agreement. We must do that if it is something they are in favour of. Would they rip up the ILO? I have heard from Bob White and the NDP over and over again that the ILO is a wonderful and important institution. The ILO interferes with sovereignty. It tells states what do. It says that there must be certain labour standards and that they cannot do this or that.

Every country that enters into any international agreement loses some degree of its sovereignty, but it pools its sovereignty in an international way to benefit overall. That is what free trade of the Americas is about. That is what the summit of the Americas is about. That is why I think the resolution at this time is misinformed and ill-advised.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Madam Speaker, I have had the pleasure of working with my hon. colleague on the foreign affairs committee when it studied the FTAA.

Most government speakers are stating the benefits of FTAA: what it will do for Canada and how it will proceed. I agree there are potential benefits out there. I do not agree with the position the NDP takes. We agree with the government that there are advantages to the FTAA, but the question is: Why cannot the agreement be debated in the House?

The government talks about its website with all the information regarding the negotiations. We are saying that when the agreement is finalized it should be brought to the House. The House should be allowed to debate it because we as elected representatives want the ability to speak to that agreement in the House. Statements should be made on that agreement and, as a matter of fact, on all international agreements.

Why is my colleague opposed to bringing that international agreement into the House for debate?

**Mr. Bill Graham:** Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question because that is the part of my speech I did not actually get to.

I raised earlier with one of our colleagues in the Bloc that I respect the ongoing debate.

• (1335)

The way the system works in our country at this time is that the government negotiates and ratifies international agreements, and when they require implementation in the House, they are brought to the House for the legislation to be passed. At that time we have an opportunity to discuss it, as we did with the WTO and with all other international agreements.

What is being asked here is that before ratification the government should involve the House or have a debate in the House. This suggests, if I may, with all humility and respect for the opposition member's position, that we are, as the U.S. congress is, directing the government as to how to conduct international affairs, which does represent a substantial change in our practice today.

It is a change that is happening. As I said, in the case of the MAI we had a committee that examined the MAI before it had even been

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negotiated. There are opportunities for the members to be engaged. I do not think that this resolution is necessary to do that.

The debate will go on. It will be in our committees. We will have an opportunity to discuss this on all sides of the House. When the time comes and the agreement has been put in place, the government will bring it forward to the House with the necessary implementing legislation and we will then have an opportunity to deal with it. That is my position and has always been the position of the government. I think the way in which we have done it in the House is the way in which it is in the best interests of the Canadian public.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Madam Speaker, I wish to tell the hon. member that the MAI was referred to the foreign affairs commission long after the texts were released on the Internet by a group of American citizens, thus creating an uproar, particularly among western countries, but also worldwide.

It is because of actions taken by civil society that we were able to have that debate here. What would the hon. member think of a union that would not ask its members to ratify the collective agreement negotiated for them? Would he not say that this sort of thing would not fly?

In our motion, we are simply asking that a basic principle of democracy be respected. I am taking this opportunity to ask the hon. member to clarify a statement made by the Prime Minister of Canada to the General Assembly of the Organization of American States on February 5:

By the same token, we understand that it cannot be about trade alone. It is not just a contract among corporations and governments. First and foremost, it is an agreement among—and about—people. It must be holistic in nature. It must include—

I want to stress the word “include”.

—improving the efficiency of financial markets, protecting labour rights and the environment, and having better development cooperation.

Based on that statement from the Prime Minister of Canada, am I to understand that the Canadian government supports an agreement on the free trade zone of the Americas that would include provisions to protect workers and the environment in particular?

**Mr. Bill Graham:** Madam Speaker, if I understood them correctly, these are two excellent questions.

I agree with the member that the text of the MAI was made public, which is why the civil society got involved. But the civil society is also involved in the debate on free trade in the Americas without having seen the texts beforehand.

The problem with the MAI is that the text that was made public was not the official text. It was a series of proposals put forward by a number of governments. It is always the same problem with this kind of negotiations. There is always someone who says “Here is



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the text", but it is not the real text. It is only a proposal brought forward by a government. It is better to see the text before we get involved. That is my answer to the first question.

To answer the second question, I think we should address the issues of the environment, human rights and the protection of workers as part of our negotiations with all the Americas. These issues are not addressed only in the free trade agreement, but in all our negotiations with the Americas.

This is why the Summit of the Americas is so important. It deals not only with international trade, but also with integration and the welfare of all the citizens of our hemisphere.

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ):** Madam Speaker, the debate launched today by my hon. colleague from Joliette is crucial to the future of the people of Quebec and the people of Canada as well as all the inhabitants of the western hemisphere, the three Americas.

• (1340)

When everything we look at, read, listen to, eat and perhaps what will matter for us tomorrow is determined around international tables, it is fairly easy to understand why Quebec must become a sovereign state. Without sovereignty, Quebec will never, under the present system, have a place at these international tables, and that is regrettable.

Until we have sovereignty—which will come, I am positive—the Bloc Québécois has taken a fairly clear and innovative position, which I will reveal now.

We think the provinces have to be directly involved in the negotiations at the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City, because the issues to be discussed there—including cultural diversity—are too important, too fundamental, to the very existence of the people of Quebec to be simply left in the hands of the federal government alone.

Unfortunately, and this is somewhat predictable given the closed minds of our colleagues opposite, the government is obstinately refusing to give what, to a growing number of Canadians and Quebecers, is perfectly natural.

We have to find an original way to involve the provinces in the negotiations, which, in many cases, will be on issues that are fundamentally and exclusively provincial matters according to the Constitution of Canada.

For many years now, the premiers have been unanimous in their demand to be included in the negotiation of international treaties concerning their spheres of jurisdiction.

We suggest the following. The team of Canadian negotiators, who will be in attendance at the Summit of the Americas, should naturally report to the Minister for International Trade, but also to the provincial ministers for international trade, in the case of the provinces that have such a minister, so that they can keep an eye on the negotiators.

So, a joint federal-provincial committee could be set up to ensure that the negotiators respected the priorities set not only by the federal government, but by the provincial governments as well. To me, it seems inconceivable that federal negotiators, who answer to the federal Minister for International Trade only, could make commitments on behalf of Canada as a whole, including its territorial divisions, in areas over which this House has no jurisdiction.

Our first suggestion is that we establish a federal-provincial committee responsible for supervising the work of federal negotiators. The second is that we should allow those provinces that are interested to appoint a member of the negotiating team so they can be directly involved in these negotiations which, I repeat, are crucial.

Once an agreement is reached, it will be important to get the approval of this House, to obtain our approval as elected representatives of the people. Not only will this parliament, this House, have to be involved in the ratification process, but so will the various provincial legislative assemblies.

It would be absolutely essential to ensure that agreements are tabled and debated in parliament and approved by resolution before ratification of the treaty by Canada.

If I may, I would like to go back to the issue of approval by the provinces and perhaps look at what is being done elsewhere. In the few minutes we have left, I suggest we look at the model so often mentioned by the Minister for International Trade, namely the European model.

• (1345)

His colleague, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, is also trying to talk about Europe. So we will. If that is what they want to talk about, fine.

In Europe, the economic commission for Europe, which negotiates for the 15 member countries of the European union, must obtain a clearly defined mandate from those countries before undertaking any negotiations.

Before actual negotiations begin, there is a debate. There must be agreement on the mandate that will be given to the economic commission for Europe in negotiating trade agreements. Once negotiators have arrived at an agreement, the commission must go



*Supply*

back to the principals, the member countries of the European economic union. The member countries must decide whether or not to approve that agreement.

I therefore make the following suggestion: could we not consider the team of Canadian negotiators to be agents not just of the federal government but of the governments of the 10 other provinces, and have a system in which the provinces, which are the principals, as well as the provincial legislatures and the federal parliament ratify the results obtained by their agents, in this case the team of Canadian trade negotiators?

This direct involvement of the provinces is vital because it will facilitate the implementation of agreements which, I remind the House, will impact on a number of areas of exclusively provincial jurisdiction. The provinces, which will have been full participants in the process from the outset, will more easily be able to join forces and ensure that the ratification process goes ahead even more quickly.

One of the most frequently heard criticisms of globalization concerns the lack, too often expressed, of control by members of the public over a phenomenon which is increasingly having an impact on us. When a youngster clicks on a mouse and surfs on the Internet, when a retired man checks the return on his retirement funds, when a farmer milks his cows and plans the sale of his products on the international markets, we can say that they are all affected by globalization. This is not just pure imagination. There are very down to earth applications.

With the procedures I have mentioned, we would not only avoid the discussion of trade agreements behind closed doors by heads of state and heads of government or their ministers, but we would also involve the main representatives of the civil society, and I am referring to the members of the House of Commons and of the various provincial legislatures in Canada.

I will conclude. Through the creation of a committee to supervise the Canadian negotiators, the involvement of interested provinces in the appointment of Canadian negotiators, the approval of these agreements by the Canadian parliament and legislatures, and a close involvement of the states through parliament and the various legislatures, we will succeed not only in restoring public confidence in the politicians, but also in making sure the Canadian Constitution and provincial jurisdictions are respected.

This is the best procedure possible, short of Quebec becoming a sovereign state. When that day comes, Quebec's interests will be really well protected by our representatives in these negotiations where decisions are made that affect us in our daily life.

[*English*]

**Mr. Pat Martin (Winnipeg Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I agree with many of the remarks made by my hon. colleague from the Bloc Québécois. I know he comes from a legal background and

has been involved with many rounds of bargaining and negotiations.

● (1350)

I think this is what he and I share. We both find it quite galling that the players at the table of the FTAA do not want freely elected governments involved at this stage. They clearly will not allow it. They are barring it. In fact it goes further than that. The former head of the WTO, Ruggiero, made this startling comment. He said "There is a surplus of democracy in the world which is interfering with the free movement of capital and investment".

There are people out there in the world who actually believe there is a surplus of democracy, and that freely elected governments and freely elected representatives like those of us in this room have no business at a high level table where they are bargaining trade deals. That is offensive to all Canadians. Surely, all people in Quebec and everywhere in the country should be offended by that.

I would like the hon. member to talk a bit about this. We are facing a home heating fuel crisis in this country as we speak. When Canadians came to their government to ask for some relief and begging their elected representatives to do something to provide some relief for them, they were told "Gee, sorry we cannot help you". We traded away any ability to influence pricing in the last trade agreement with NAFTA. Some idiot on our behalf gave it away, sold the farm and sold away our economic sovereignty and our ability to dictate a domestic market pricing for home heating fuel.

I ask the hon. member to expand on the impact that that may have in the province of Quebec and elsewhere.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** Madam Speaker, first I wish to thank my colleague, the member for Winnipeg, for his question.

I am one of those who believe that states, governments, elected houses of representatives still have an important role to play in terms of globalization, provided they are willing to do so.

I believe that the best system of checks and balances against uncontrolled globalization is more democracy, more power, not only for civil society in general but also for assemblies elected by the population.

With regard to the more specific issue of heating oil, I believe that the error was made by this government, which decided to improvise, because an election was coming. In order to avoid any discussion of the issue during the election campaign, it decided to sign cheques for almost everyone, haphazardly, in order to keep things calm and to be able to say, after the election, that it had done what had to be done.

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The problem does not stem from NAFTA or from the Free Trade Agreement, but from this government's lack of determination to deal with the problems of concentration and lack of competition in the oil industry.

Instead of acting, the government decided to let the Conference Board of Canada review the situation, knowing very well that large oil companies are major contributors to the conference board. This was the same as asking the industry to self-regulate. In any industry that self-regulates, there is a risk of monopolistic or anti-competitive practices.

**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):** Madam Speaker, I have a question for the member of the Bloc Quebecois with regard to the protection of our public health care system.

[*English*]

Many organizations, including The Council of Canadians, have made preliminary investigations based on material available and have concluded that the trade negotiations committee of the FTAA, led by Canada, is proposing an expanded services agreement in this hemispheric pact.

The concern has been raised that these powers being proposed under this agreement, in conjunction with discussions at the WTO pursuant to GATS, will give unequalled new rights to the transnational corporations of the hemisphere to compete for and even challenge every publicly funded service of its government, including health care, education, social security, culture and environmental protection.

I think that is a legitimate concern. I would like to hear the position of the Bloc on that matter.

• (1355)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Richard Marceau:** I will be brief, Madam Speaker. First, I would like to know the sources used by the Council of Canadians, because I have not seen the texts. This is one of the reasons we brought forward this motion today. We have asked the government on several occasions if we could have access not only to Canada's initial negotiating position, but also to the working texts of the nine sectoral groups on which the free trade area of the Americas will be built.

I agree with the member on the importance of having this information right now. I hope, Madam Speaker, that you will tell that to your caucus and to your colleague, the Minister for International Trade. We need your support.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to take part in this debate initiated by my eminent colleague, the hon. member for Joliette, whom I have known for years.

I have had the opportunity to work with him in the past on the progress of trade negotiations, including the GATT, which has now become the World Trade Organization.

In the first part of my presentation, I want to briefly discuss the issue of trust. I am stating the obvious when I say that nowadays, whenever an international meeting takes place, whether in Seattle, Geneva or elsewhere—and Quebec City will be no exception—incredibly huge rallies are held. One has to wonder about these large protests.

There have always been protests, but they used to be smaller and less frequent than they have been in the past three or four years. Why are so many people now marching in the streets? We have to realize that these people are not all anarchists. Some groups represent the poor in our society, while others take an interest in issues such as education and health. Protesters come from various backgrounds, but most are ordinary citizens who are concerned about what is being negotiated behind closed doors, on their behalf, but in their absence and without any warning to them about what is coming.

One also has to wonder about the voter participation rate. People, and these people are probably the same ones who wonder about international negotiations, cannot see why they should bother to vote for a representative who ought to be speaking on their behalf, discussing fundamental issues affecting their future and informing them of the outcome of these debates, but who, because of the lack of transparency of the negotiation process at the international, bilateral, trilateral or multilateral level with 38 countries in the case of the Americas, does not inform them of what is being discussed, even though it concerns their future and issues as important as education, health, the environment and so on.

These people do not have anyone speaking on their behalf, even if they vote for a representative in a democratic fashion. Civil society does not have a direct spokesperson on whom it can rely.

**The Speaker:** The hon. member will have at least seven minutes left after oral question period, when we resume debate.

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## STATEMENTS BY MEMBERS

[*Translation*]

### RURAL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES FAIR

**Mr. David Price:** Mr. Speaker, I am proud to announce that on February 16 and 17, that is tomorrow and Saturday, in East Angus in the beautiful riding of Compton—Stanstead, the federal government will be holding its first rural programs and services fair.

This project is a new initiative based on the concept of showing the role federal government institutions play in people's day to day lives and improving communications between the public and the government.

The project dovetails perfectly with a number of government initiatives such as the Canadian Rural Partnership, Service Canada and the Canada Information Office.

As well, by providing the population with the skills for electronic access to the various departments, the event will make a truly concrete contribution to promoting the initiative of a connected Canada.

• (1400)

[English]

Once again we see the government not only talking but taking real action in rural Canada.

\* \* \*

#### CANADIAN ALLIANCE

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, despite the misinformation and defamation thrown at us by the Liberals, the Canadian Alliance achieved huge gains in the last election.

In Quebec we gained over 200,000 votes. The PCs lost 76% of their support in Quebec. In Ontario we were the only party to increase our popular vote, by 18.5%. The NDP and PCs each went down about 26%. Across Canada our support went up by over 30% while the NDP went down by 24% and the PCs by 36%.

Despite a lower voter turnout we gained 764,000 votes. We elected 10% more members to the House of Commons while the Conservatives and NDP elected 50% fewer than in 1997.

I say to Alliance members and Canadians across the country, let us work hard to build on this success so that we will win the next election.

\* \* \*

#### EAST COAST MUSIC AWARDS

**Hon. Andy Scott (Fredericton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have the pleasure to rise today in the House to congratulate the musicians of Atlantic Canada on the occasion of the 13th annual East Coast Music Awards in Charlottetown last weekend.

I take this opportunity to specifically congratulate award winners Julian Austin of New Brunswick, who won the award for Country Artist of the Year and the LaPointes, a musical group from Fredericton whose inspired sound won them the award for gospel group of the year. I also congratulate Joel, Andy, Jeff, Janice LaPointe MacLaughlin, Jeep, and proud parents Bill and Faith LaPointe.

*S. O. 31*

Music has long been important in defining who we are in Atlantic Canada, and it is always gratifying to see so many of our artists achieve this kind of recognition. I congratulate all the honoured artists.

\* \* \*

#### EAST COAST MUSIC AWARDS

**Mr. Wayne Easter (Malpeque, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as a proud member from Prince Edward Island I too would like to congratulate my fellow Islanders on the tremendous success of the East Coast Music Awards held last Sunday. We are very proud of the many Island nominees who showcased the exceptional musical talent that Prince Edward Island has to offer.

I especially congratulate: Lennie Gallant from Rustico for three awards: male artist, album of the year and roots traditional; Theresa Doyle, who won the award for children's artist group of the year; and the Jive Kings for the award for jazz artist group of the year.

As many members know, Prince Edward Island hosted the awards this year and by all accounts it was a major success. I congratulate all the organizers and volunteers who showed the rest of Canada that Prince Edward Island really knows how to pull off a first class event.

\* \* \*

#### SCOTT MCKOWEN

**Mr. John Richardson (Perth—Middlesex, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise in the House today to congratulate Mr. Scott Mckowen, an artist from Stratford, Ontario. Mr. Mckowen was chosen by the Royal Canadian Mint to design the commemorative silver coin series, which took a year to complete.

This year's coin series will reflect the 50th anniversary of the National Ballet of Canada. Mr. Mckowen's design is an image of the first play ever performed by the company, *Les Sylphides*, which was performed on November 12, 1951.

Mr. Mckowen has plenty of experience working in the theatre industry. His business has been designing brochures and theatre posters for various theatres. Mr. Mckowen's work has also appeared on the cover of *Newsweek* magazine in 1993 and was displayed in an exhibition at the Canadian embassy in Washington, D.C. in 1996.

I congratulate him on an excellent work of art for all Canadians to enjoy.

\* \* \*

#### THE ENVIRONMENT

**Mr. Randy White (Langley—Abbotsford, Canadian Alliance):** The SE2 project will seriously harm our precious environment in the Fraser Valley and the lower mainland of British Columbia. Virtually every individual organization and the public

*S. O. 31*

are against it. In fact, other than the private American corporation SE2 and a few strike it rich entrepreneurs, everyone is against it.

Conspicuous by their absence, however, are the federal Minister of the Environment and his department. One would think that they would be the first to say no.

When we defeat the project, and we will, the minister will claim he had a lot to do with it. A minister who promises that he will help citizens of British Columbia fight against corporate America during the federal election and then crawls under his environmentally unfriendly rock afterward has no credibility whatsoever.

• (1405)

Would the environment minister rather stay under his rock while the emissions gather on top of it, or stand up and fight for what is right and never go under the rock in the first place? Or, is he simply a political coward?

\* \* \*

**ROBERT DOUGLAS JOHNSTON**

**Mrs. Judi Longfield (Whitby—Ajax, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on February 2 of this year Robert Douglas Johnston, a resident of Brooklin in my riding of Whitby—Ajax, was presented with a Medal of Bravery in a ceremony at Rideau Hall.

In February 1998 Robert Johnston saved an 11 year old from drowning. Mr. Johnston was walking his dog when he witnessed two boys fall through the ice of a pond. The first boy, closer to shore, managed to pull himself out. The second boy, however, was unable to save himself.

Without hesitation, Mr. Johnston ran the 18 metres that separated him from the young victim. When the ice began to crack, he crawled along the thin surface until he neared the hole. As he attempted to grab hold of the boy, the ice collapsed and he too fell into the freezing water.

Undeterred, he grabbed the victim and, despite being completely submerged several times, managed to bring the boy to the edge. Unable to push the young victim on to the breaking ice, Mr. Johnston made several unsuccessful attempts to lift himself up. He was successful eventually and was able to haul the boy out of the water and carry him to safety.

Members of the House congratulate Robert Johnston, a very worthwhile recipient of the Governor General's Medal of Bravery. In the face of great personal danger, he conducted himself in a completely selfless manner.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

**15 FÉVRIER 1839**

**Mr. Stéphane Bergeron (Verchères—Les-Patriotes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, after a tug-of-war with Telefilm Canada that lasted

several years, the long-awaited film by Pierre Falardeau, *15 février 1839*, has finally made it to the silver screen.

This film chronicles the last 24 hours in the lives of two condemned men, Thomas Chevalier de Lorimier and Charles Hindelang. More than that, the film pays homage to the 12 men of Lower Canada who met their deaths on the scaffold at the hands of the vengeful British conquerors, and to all the other men and women who were victims of shame and ostracism, those who fought and were wounded or killed on the battlefield, those who languished in English jails or in cruel exile for daring to hold high the torch of freedom, justice and democracy.

Three days before de Lorimier was hanged, he wrote to a friend expressing the hope that the unfortunate who died on the scaffold to win back his oppressed country would sometimes be recalled to mind.

He did not, perhaps, fully realize that, at the very instant the trap door of the scaffold dropped to plunge him to his death, his name and the names of his unfortunate companions in death would go down in indelible letters in the glorious pantheon of immortal heroes.

\* \* \*

**CANADA'S NATIONAL FLAG DAY**

**Ms. Beth Phinney (Hamilton Mountain, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, on this, Canada's National Flag Day, perhaps you will permit me to cite the benefits of the citizenship we share as Canadians.

This year's festivities focus on our country's diversity. This is a particularly happy choice, in view of the way our country has developed since we adopted our current flag 36 years ago.

[English]

We are fortunate that Canada can claim a level of multicultural diversity without parallel in the world. As we continue to work to strengthen the federation, National Flag Day gives us a prime opportunity to reflect on this vital and continuing part of our heritage.

I know all members will join the constituents of Hamilton Mountain and me in reaffirming our commitment to Canada and the values that our country and flag represent.

\* \* \*

**NATIONAL FLAG OF CANADA DAY**

**Ms. Cheryl Gallant (Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise in the House to recognize National Flag of Canada Day and to draw attention to the song *Our Great Canadian Flag*. This song was written to honour the Canadian flag on this day.



The Canadian flag song was inspired by three very patriotic constituents of mine: Marjorie Ranger who wrote the lyrics and Ron and James Resmer who composed and recorded the music.

National Flag of Canada Day gives all Canadians the opportunity to celebrate the most visible and recognizable symbol of Canada. The Canadian flag song complements that recognition at a time when the burden of national unity and the need for symbols were never more pressing. The song eloquently states what we as Canadians believe:

Up in the Great Canadian Skies  
Our Flag soars High and Free  
As far to the East as to the West  
It flies with Dignity

Portrayed by the Maple Leaf  
Red and White combined  
It reminds me of our Heritage  
In this Noble Country of mine

\* \* \*

• (1410)

[Translation]

#### ARTS AND CULTURE

**Mr. Claude Duplain (Portneuf, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, a number of events are currently taking place in the field of the arts and culture.

First, there is the race for the Bourse Rideau, which will be held between February 11 and 16 in Ottawa. This event gives francophone artists in Canada an opportunity to link up with the public and the cultural industry.

I invite Canadians to pay particular attention to the various activities, including the February 13 performance to be broadcast on Radio-Canada radio on February 17. We look forward to the performances of Annette Champagne, Jean-Guy "Chuck" Labelle, Michel Thériault and Barachois.

I would like to mention the federal government's involvement. It collaborated with the Fédération culturelle canadienne-française, the Bourse Rideau and Musicaction. This is a winning partnership, which testifies to the virtues of healthy co-operation.

In closing, I would like to congratulate Quebec on its initiative in holding the Semaine québécoise des arts et de la culture. We continue to encourage these activities, which promote artistic expression in Canada.

\* \* \*

[English]

#### POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Ms. Libby Davies (Vancouver East, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the situation facing Canadian students is worsening. Rising tuition, increasing debt and now privatization are all threatening the accessibility and affordability of post-secondary education.

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Students in P.E.I. recently marched on their provincial minister's office because high tuition means many Islanders cannot afford to go to university. We need a national tuition freeze, following the lead of B.C. and Quebec. We need a national grants program, not savings schemes that favour those already with resources.

However, instead of accessibility we get privatization. Why has the federal government remained silent in the face of Alberta's decision to allow the first for profit, private, degree granting university? It is an outrage. First the feds allow private health care via bill 11. Now they are going to let privatized education slide by.

The threat to our publicly funded and administered system is grave indeed. It leaves Canada wide open to challenges under trade agreements, allowing U.S. transnational—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Rimouski-Neigette-et-la Mitis.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

#### CHEVALIER DE LORIMIER

**Mrs. Suzanne Tremblay (Rimouski-Neigette-et-la-Mitis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I will read from the political last will and testament of Chevalier de Lorimier.

I die unrepentant. In taking part in the fight for independence, I sought only the good of my country; my views and my actions were sincere and were untarnished by any of the crimes which dishonour humanity and which are only too common when turbulent passions are unleashed.

I leave behind my children. Their legacy is the memory of my misfortunes. Your father's crime was to fail. Had his actions met with success, he would have been honoured.

As for you, my fellow citizens, you will be served by my death and by the deaths of the others condemned with me to the gallows. I have but a few hours to live and it was my wish to divide this precious time between my duty to my religion and my duty to my fellow citizens; for them I die the infamous death of a murderer, for them I leave my young children and my wife without support, and for them I die with these words on my lips: "Vive la liberté, vive l'indépendance".

\* \* \*

[English]

#### NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

**Mr. David Pratt (Nepean—Carleton, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, what is Mike Harris trying to do to the taxpayers in the nation's capital? First he launched an amalgamation process, telling everyone it would save money. Then his representative low-balled the estimated amalgamation costs and told people the province would pick up 75% of the costs.



### Oral Questions

Now, after the amalgamation costs have mushroomed to \$189 million, courtesy of an out of control, micromanaging transition board, the province is saying that it will only pick up 50%, leaving local taxpayers holding the bag for \$94.5 million.

For taxpayers in previously debt free municipalities in my riding, like Nepean, Rideau and Osgoode, this is a real kick in the teeth. These municipalities have carefully managed their resources over many years. Now, because of the added debt, they will likely be forced to delay capital projects required to keep up with explosive growth.

Tory MPP John Baird says that we should turn the temperature down. I can assure him the situation will get a lot hotter in the days and weeks to come.

\* \* \*

### STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, just a short while ago the minister responsible for HRDC announced the summer career placement program. Unlike other years, this year municipalities are expected to contribute half the cost of hiring students and are treated the same way as the private sector.

What this will do is eliminate the opportunity for many students to be employed, since many municipalities, especially those in the smaller areas that are now taking out street lights in order to meet their budgets, cannot afford to pay to hire summer students. Consequently, the opportunity is lost for a great contribution to be made to the municipality and a great opportunity for students to receive good, solid, supervised employment.

• (1415)

We ask the minister to make sure that this regulation is changed before the programs are implemented.

\* \* \*

### HOCKEY

**Ms. Nancy Karetak-Lindell (Nunavut, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this weekend the first ever junior hockey tournament in Nunavut history will take place in Rankin Inlet. Six teams from across the north will compete before excited fans and also hockey scouts from the south.

As a special treat, the Stanley Cup will be on display during the Polar Bear Plate Junior C Tournament which will inspire many talented hockey players. We know there are many great hockey players in the north and are proud to showcase them to the rest of the country.

Nunavut was truly honoured to be represented in the 2001 CHL/NHL top prospects game in Calgary by Rankin Inlet native Jordin Tootoo of the Brandon Wheat Kings of the WHL. Jordin has been nominated for many honours, including Manitoba's sportsman of the year, and is a true model for Nunavut hockey players.

Jordin's story proves that even if one is from an isolated Nunavut hamlet, one can still compete with the best of the country.

I wish good luck to all participants.

\* \* \*

### DISTRICT OF UCLUELET

**Mr. James Lunney (Nanaimo—Alberni, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to draw attention to the dire economic situation of the Ucluelet district of the riding of Nanaimo—Alberni.

While many regions of the country are enjoying current positive economic dividends, the collapse of the hake fishery has wreaked havoc on this small and fragile community. Three fish plants remain closed due to lack of fish. Hundreds of workers have had no work and therefore do not qualify under present EI regulations. The suffering in this coastal community is as great as anything that has been seen on the east coast of Canada.

Last December a meeting of regional and provincial representatives took place to examine what could be done to help. Concerned community leaders have assembled an advisory committee asking the federal government to come to the table and help resolve this crisis. To date this has not happened.

On behalf of the good citizens of the district of Ucluelet, I ask the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans and the Minister of Human Resources Development to focus attention to this side of the continent and address this important issue for a community in crisis.

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## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[English]

### GOVERNMENT OF CANADA

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I believe it is one of the responsibilities of the official opposition to give credit where credit is due when the government appears to be doing something responsible.

It seems that there is at least one person over there who is concerned about the mismanagement of hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars. We hear that the President of the Treasury Board is now saying that she will be hiring and assigning 150 new auditors. We give credit for that. That is good news.

Since we have been asking questions for two years about the shenanigans in Shawinigan, how many of those new auditors will be assigned to the Shawinigan file?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, if the Leader of the Opposition really wants to give credit to the government, why does he not also give credit for our work on health care, for our work on tax cuts, for our work on the economy,

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for our work on the environment and for our work for children and justice? We deserve equal credit for these measures.

Because the Leader of the Opposition has not mentioned any of these things for days, and his lead critics have not mentioned anything on these for days, it means that he agrees with us and with Canadians that we are doing a good job. Thank you Mr. Leader for this strong endorsement of our programs.

**The Speaker:** I know the Deputy Prime Minister is an experienced member and he will want to address all his remarks to the Chair.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, getting to the issue of accountability, which is what health care funding, education funding and all the other areas are about, if there will be more referees on the ice, it is important that there is a system of monitoring. That system has to require at least three things. It has to very clearly set out the goals of the program. It has to have a system in place to monitor the progress of the goals and then something to show whether the goals were achieved.

I would like to know if the President of the Treasury Board has consulted with any of the provinces that have these award winning systems in place to monitor a similar program because the auditor general says that they do not have this program. Or, is she just concerned with accountability as far as it goes and ends where the Prime Minister—

**The Speaker:** The hon. the Deputy Prime Minister.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the President of the Treasury Board is seeking good advice wherever it is.

In that regard, I wonder if the Leader of the Opposition is seeking the advice of the people who took part in the recent poll in Alberta which passed quite a judgment on him. It is causing him to hang his head today I am sure.

• (1420)

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, if he believes the Liberal pollsters he would acknowledge that the Prime Minister has the lowest ratings. It is quite interesting that he has mentioned that.

We keep asking these questions. For the last couple of years every week there has been another question and every week there have been more excuses. We are seeing that today as this goes on.

While the Prime Minister was arm-twisting some \$600,000 out of the president of the Business Development Bank, a federally funded regional development program was ponying up another \$200,000 for the Auberge Grand-Mère. That brings the total of the bailout to \$3.4 million.

Why were millions of taxpayer dollars spent to bail out a business that even the ethics counsellor is now saying the Prime Minister had a financial interest in?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** The hon. member is again misquoting and misstating the position of the ethics counsellor. The ethics counsellor had made some speculative hypothetical comments. When it came to his ruling on the basis of his careful investigation, not once but twice he said that the Prime Minister had not breached any rules and did not own the shares in question after 1993. He has not, I submit, been in control of any investor funds. They came under the Quebec provincial government program which is administered by that Quebec provincial government.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, if the ethics counsellor says something positive about the Prime Minister, then it is accurate. If he says something that is not positive, then it is speculative. That is very interesting.

It was yesterday that we saw the first signs of the government starting to cry uncle as we continued on this particular file. It does not want us to ask questions. I need to ask questions on this because it was the auditor general who said that the contract that Mr. Gauthier had should not have been given to him. The auditor general that the company should not have been selected.

Why is the Deputy Prime Minister so quick to defend a contract that the auditor general was quick to condemn?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the fact of the matter is that this contract was awarded by competitive bid to a firm which I understand had extensive experience in this area. I would be happy to have the minister for international development supplement my answer with additional facts, but I think I have put the facts on the table of the House today.

**Mr. Stockwell Day (Leader of the Opposition, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the fact is the auditor general said that the company should not have been selected.

[*Translation*]

I am certain that after two years of our questions about Shawinigan, the Prime Minister knows that there are a great many suspicions about the Prime Minister himself. There is only one way to eliminate all doubt. Why does the solicitor general not set up an independent inquiry?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, these suspicions are ill-founded.

[*English*]

Tim Naumetz wrote today in *The Ottawa Citizen*:

### Oral Questions

Despite Mr. Day's accusation that Mr. Chrétien met with the immigrants who invested in Mr. Gauthier's companies, his deputy leader later said she did not know the identity of the investors.

"I'm not aware at this time who the actual investors are," said Ms. Gray. "I'm not alleging a whole lot here. I'm trying to join the dots. There are a lot of names floating around, but I'm not aware of any of those."

I rest my case.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**The Speaker:** Some hon. members are pointing out something I failed to notice and that is that of course in reading quotations members must be careful not to refer to one another by name.

\* \* \*

[Translation]

### BUDGET SURPLUSES

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in his mini budget last fall, the Minister of Finance estimated that the surplus would reach \$11.9 billion in 2000-01. He added that the government was undertaking to pay down a minimum of \$10 billion in debt in 2000-01.

But, this week we learned that the real surplus could reach \$18 billion, \$6 billion more than forecast.

Are we to understand that the Minister of Finance's intention is to use the additional \$6 billion to pay down the debt?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I must point out to the hon. member that the forecasts for the remainder of the year are not final. They will be confirmed in July or August. I can assure the House that we are going to continue to pursue a responsible tax policy, as we have done in the past.

• (1425)

**Mr. Gilles Duceppe (Laurier—Sainte-Marie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, talking about the election campaign, the Prime Minister proposed to use 50% of the surpluses to reduce the debt and lower taxes, and the other 50% to fund social programs.

In his mini budget, the Minister of Finance proposed to allocate only 20% of the surpluses to social programs. Now, he is about to invest only 10% in transfers to the provinces and in social programs.

We would like to know the government's position. Is it the one stated in the Prime Minister's speeches, or the one presented in the Minister of Finance's figures? Which one determines government policy?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we will continue to pursue a balanced fiscal policy, that is we will continue to pay off the debt,

to reduce taxes and, at the same time, to invest in social programs and in the economy of the future. This is the Liberal program and it is a very responsible program, in our opinion.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the surplus is far higher than predicted and the Minister of Finance could apply up to \$16 billion to the debt instead of the \$10 billion forecast last October. We have nothing against paying down the debt.

However, at a time when there are such crying needs in health and in education, does the Minister of Finance not admit that it is high time for him to adopt a balanced approach and to not only pay part of the debt but also transfer funds to Quebec and the provinces for health and education?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, the hon. member needs to acknowledge the historic agreement between the Prime Minister and the provinces concerning transfer payments and the Canada social transfer for health and social programs. This is what federal co-operation is all about and we will continue to act in this way with all of the provinces.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my colleagues and I are so anxious to be sovereign and to administer on our own the \$33 billion in taxes we hand over to these people, instead of having to listen to ridiculous answers like that one.

I am merely asking this: will the minister admit that there are crying needs in health and education and that it is time this government, which refused any and all debate during the election campaign, transferred money to finance health and education? Those systems are in bad shape, yet the government has surplus funds coming out of its ears.

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member ought to acknowledge what we have already done under the historic agreement signed by the Prime Minister and all the provincial premiers. When he talks of sovereignty, what also has to be acknowledged is what the sovereignists have done to the Quebec economy.

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[English]

### TAXATION

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, some executive salaries in this country are obscene. There are bank CEOs taking home 7 and even 8 figure compensation packages that are 500 times the wage of their own employees. The gap between the highest and the lowest earners is wider than ever, making these inflated salaries even more unacceptable.

*Oral Questions*

Why does the government not stop subsidizing this obscenity by denying corporations tax deductions on salaries in excess of \$300,000?

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am very proud of the role that our financial services sector plays in Canada's economy.

It directly employs over 500,000 Canadians. It is one of the biggest exporters that we have, with more than 50% of its revenue coming from offshore and about 85% of the global taxes it pays are paid here in this country.

I am very pleased at the efforts that our institutions in the financial services sector have made on behalf of all Canadians.

**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, we are talking here about a question of simple fairness. The minister should step outside of his bubble and recognize that hard working Canadians do not regard a \$17.4 million salary as simply the price of doing business. There is another word for it. It is greed.

The federal government should get out of the business of subsidizing through the tax system corporations that pay these salaries. Has the government not done enough lately for millionaires?

Why will the government not put a reasonable cap on deductions for bloated corporate salaries?

• (1430)

**Hon. Jim Peterson (Secretary of State (International Financial Institutions), Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, we live in an extremely competitive world. I am pleased that many of our Canadians are reaching out and establishing new markets around the globe.

We see what the Prime Minister is doing by leading team Canada to China which has a market potential of 1.2 billion people. To try to put Canadians at an economic disadvantage vis-à-vis all our other competitors in the world would be to hamstring them, and we will not do it.

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**ETHICS COUNSELLOR**

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Deputy Prime Minister. Did officials in the office of the Prime Minister prepare a memorandum proposing the answers that might be given by the Business Development Bank in response to inquiries about the Prime Minister's intervention on the Auberge Grand-Mère loan?

If so, how could that be described as an arm's length arrangement between a crown corporation and the Government of Canada?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I can assure the member that the only preparation for question period of which I am aware is the one that comes out of my department.

I can say to the member that he continues to draw a link with Mr. Jean Carle. A former chief of staff to the leader of the Conservative Party now works for government in a senior position. A former chief of staff to the Deputy Prime Minister, under the government in which he served, now works in a senior position in this government.

That former chief of staff of yours is my deputy minister and is a qualified individual, as qualified to work for government as Jean Carle.

**The Speaker:** I know the Minister of Industry will wish to address his remarks to the Chair.

**Right Hon. Joe Clark (Calgary Centre, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I would prefer to have him address his remarks to the question.

The ethics counsellor told the industry committee that the Prime Minister chose not to go to court to finalize the sale of the Grand-Mère shares. The Deputy Prime Minister knows that a promise to purchase is enforceable in law. An option to purchase is not.

Was the reason that the Prime Minister did not go to court the fact that there was only an option to purchase? Otherwise, why did he waste three years seeking some other purchaser instead of going directly to court to enforce what he considered to be a binding agreement?

**Hon. Brian Tobin (Minister of Industry, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, through you to the leader of the Conservative Party and further to his earlier question, the individual ultimately responsible for preparing response lines in question period for the minister on this file is my deputy minister and his former chief of staff.

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**AUDITOR GENERAL**

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, in his 2000 report the auditor general slapped CIDA for what he termed a lack of due diligence for awarding a \$6.3 million contract to Transelec.

Transelec failed to meet CIDA's own guidelines for relevant experience and Canadian ownership. According to the auditor general, Transelec should not have been selected for prequalification. Why did the minister responsible for CIDA ignore her own guidelines and award a \$6.3 million contract to Transelec?

**Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, this question has been answered many times before. The officials referred to the then minister seven companies as potential competitors. Three companies went to competition. Transelec was one of them.



*Oral Questions*

In an open competition Transelec came in 30% below the competition, or \$2 million less than any other bidder. The program that Transelec put in is now completed and taxpayers in fact saved money.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, Transelec, which is owned by Claude Gauthier, the friend of the Prime Minister, did not qualify for CIDA qualifications. It was not Canadian owned and failed CIDA's criteria for bidding on the contract.

Yet the minister did not disqualify this company. The minister broke her own rules. Was it because she was dealing with the friend of the Prime Minister?

• (1435)

**Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, first, with respect to the ownership a reputable auditing firm confirmed that Transelec was in fact in conformity with the rules.

Second, as I said, the list of companies came through the officials. It went to the minister and seven companies were selected. One of them was Transelec. They went to bid and Transelec bid 30% below any other bidder, or \$2 million less. The project is finished and taxpayers have saved money.

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[Translation]

**EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, as the government floats in billions of dollars, 60% of the unemployed, primarily young people and women, do not get employment insurance benefits. The surpluses in the employment insurance fund are applied to the debt, while these people are being denied benefits.

How can the government persist in its cuts to employment insurance, when nearly \$6 billion of its surpluses comes directly from the surpluses in the employment insurance fund?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the hon. member that we have taken a very balanced approach when it comes to employment insurance.

On the one hand, since taking office in 1993 we have been able to reduce the premiums paid by employers and employees every year, saving \$6.4 billion to those Canadians. On the other hand, we have been able to increase the benefits, not the least of which we have seen a doubling of parental benefits for all Canadians.

We have before the House a bill of amendments that I hope the hon. member will support because they do go to directly supporting Canadians in this regard.

[Translation]

**Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, billions of dollars are landing on the finance minister's desk, making a lie of his predictions, once again. At the same time, many people are being rejected when they apply for employment insurance benefits.

So, while it is swimming in surpluses, would this government explain to women and young people, to whom prosperity is denied and who pay contributions, why they will not be entitled to benefits if they are unemployed?

[English]

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think the hon. member is forgetting that over two million more Canadians are working today than there were in 1993. She is forgetting that the unemployment rate for women in Canada is at its lowest rate in 25 years. She is forgetting that the unemployment rate for young people in Canada has continuously come down.

That speaks well to the new and dynamic economy and the connection that young people have for it, but we will ensure that the benefits of the employment insurance program are there for Canadians when they need them and when they find themselves between jobs.

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**JUSTICE**

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, today the supreme court has rendered a political decision that will create a safe haven for any violent criminal, Canadian or otherwise, who comes to Canada to escape the law in the country where the crime was committed.

With this decision, the Texas seven who murdered a police officer in the United States would be safe in Canada. What will the minister do to ensure that Canadians are protected from these kinds of criminals?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am appalled that a former attorney general of a province of this country would so misrepresent the decision of the Supreme Court of Canada today.

In fact the Supreme Court of Canada upheld my ability to extradite those who have committed offences in other countries back to those countries so they can stand trial for their crimes.

**Mr. Vic Toews (Provencher, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the supreme court by its decision today demonstrated that the rule of law was secondary to a political agenda.

The Americans are concerned that Canada is a safe haven for terrorists. Now the supreme court has effectively put out the welcome mat for other murderers. What will the minister do to

*Oral Questions*

stop these potential murderers and terrorists from coming to Canada?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, as I have said, today in the case of Burns and Rafay the Supreme Court of Canada upheld my ability and my discretion to extradite those who are accused of committing crimes in other countries.

Again I come back to the point that I find it appalling that a member of the official opposition would so misrepresent a decision of the supreme court and scare the Canadian public into believing that this country will be a safe haven for criminals and felons from other countries. It will not.

\* \* \*

• (1440)

[Translation]

#### FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, in early January the Minister for International Trade announced a period of public consultations with business people and the public in preparation for discussions on the free trade agreements with Central American countries.

Now, a month and a half later, the Minister for International Trade informs us that a free trade agreement is about to be signed with Costa Rica, and may even be signed for the summit of the Americas.

Can the government confirm this information, and is this the type of transparency, opaque to say the least, we will have during negotiations on a free trade area for the Americas?

[English]

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the negotiations the member refers to are ongoing. The government is actively seeking input from all interested Canadians vis-à-vis the FTAA.

We continue to receive written submissions. We continue to receive daily comments on our website. There was a meeting of federal and provincial ministers of trade 10 days ago. The government is firmly committed to an open, transparent and inclusive process on FTAA.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister has already said, with respect to the negotiations on the free trade area, "Canada believes that openness and transparency are vital to building public acceptance and legitimacy for our undertakings".

How can he make such a speech and refuse to table the basic documents to be used in the negotiations?

[English]

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to offer to the member the website where he can access the information. If somehow he is not aware of that I wish he would see me later.

The Minister for International Trade has gone further than what I said in response to the first question. He is trying to engage civil society in every way possible. For example, he has met with NGOs, Rights and Democracy, and Oxfam-Quebec. The government is a world leader in openness and transparency in trade negotiations.

\* \* \*

#### JUSTICE

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Justice. From her own statements will she extradite those two murderers back to Washington?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I have instructed my officials to seek assurances from the state of Washington. Upon receiving those assurances, Burns and Rafay will be extradited to the United States.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, assurances of what? Again I ask for a clear statement from the Minister of Justice. Will she extradite those two back to the state of Washington?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, to the state of Washington I will extradite them immediately.

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#### INTERNATIONAL AID

**Ms. Colleen Beaumier (Brampton West—Mississauga, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, two days ago yet another earthquake, this one measuring 6.6, hit El Salvador. This was one month to the day of the initial quake that killed nearly 1,000 Salvadorans and injured 3,000. There are reports of extensive damage throughout the region and many more deaths as a result of Tuesday's quake.

Could the Minister for International Co-Operation please tell the House what Canada is doing to assist the people of El Salvador who have already suffered so much?

**Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my sympathies go to the people of El Salvador. I know the horrible situation they are in. I was there myself.

Yesterday I announced an additional \$1 million to assist with the latest quake that hit. We are trying desperately to assist them with their water systems, one of the major problems, and many other structural problems which have occurred as a result of the quake.

*Oral Questions*

• (1445)

*[Translation]***EMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, on leaving the Liberal caucus meeting, the government House leader said, in reference to Bill C-2 on employment insurance, that the opposition could not have their cake and eat it too.

My question is for the Minister of Human Resources Development. Would she agree that, in fact, the whole cake belongs to workers and employers and not to the Liberal government?

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, certain members opposite—not the member who just spoke—have chosen to delay passage of Bill C-2 before and after the election. Today, they are saying they are sorry and asking Canadians to forgive them.

It does not work like that. Members must pass this bill, which is good for all Canadians. That is what I said, and that is what we are going to do.

**Mr. Yvon Godin (Acadie—Bathurst, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the ones who take the cake in all this are the Liberals.

If Canadian workers and employers cannot have a share of the surplus in the EI fund, would the Minister of Human Resources Development tell us just what it is going to be used for?

*[English]*

**Hon. Jane Stewart (Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in my view we have presented to the House a balanced set of amendments to the Employment Insurance Act.

The bill is making its way through the usual process. From our point of view our commitment to Canadians to reintroduce that bill immediately upon being re-elected is a strong commitment and we have made good on it. The hon. member is suggesting that we should do otherwise and we will not.

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**EMPLOYMENT**

**Mr. Bill Casey (Cumberland—Colchester, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a charter of rights question for the attorney general. There are pages and pages of job openings advertised on the web page jobs.gc.ca. These jobs are available in Ottawa, jobs such as paralegals and architects. They are all federal government jobs. Down the page it says who can apply. Then it says “only those in eastern Ontario and western Quebec need apply”.

How could the Government of Canada say that people from her riding in Alberta and my riding in Nova Scotia cannot apply for a federal government job in Ottawa, in our nation’s capital? Is it not a contravention of the mobility clause in the charter of rights?

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the legislation does indeed allow the various departments, and the managers within those departments, to set geographic restrictions when posting public service jobs.

I imagine that the current case is perfectly consistent with the legislation, which allows this practice.

*[English]*

**Mr. Norman Doyle (St. John’s East, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Industry. The Minister of Industry has placed an ad with the federal public service and the ad reads that the minister is on the job hunt for a secretary for his own department. He goes on to say that only people from Ontario or Quebec need apply.

Is Newfoundland’s regional minister telling me that only people from Ontario or Quebec may apply for that job within his own department, that Newfoundlanders are not welcome?

*[Translation]*

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard (President of the Treasury Board and Minister responsible for Infrastructure, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I repeat, the legislation does indeed allow managers to limit the geographical areas in which candidates must reside.

It is not hard to understand. If a position for a secretary in the National Capital Region, for example, is open to all regions of Canada, this would mean that there could be 1 million applications for the job. The member can see where this might lead.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Hon. Lucienne Robillard:** The legislation allows managers to set geographical restrictions on applications for public service positions.

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*[English]***ABORIGINAL AFFAIRS**

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the people of the Sagkeeng reserve in Manitoba are living in poverty and the band’s finances are in a mess. Yet the government allowed 75 staff members to go on a taxpayer funded Caribbean cruise and there is a trail of unpaid bills all over the place.

*Oral Questions*

It is hard to believe that the minister of Indian affairs really cares about the families and the children of this reserve. If he does, why does he not order a forensic audit of the Sagkeeng band and clean up this mess?

• (1450)

**Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I made very clear to the member that he has to differentiate between two particular departments.

I will tell him what our department has done. We have had a number of audits done of the Sagkeeng first nation. Those audits are in. Those audits do comply with our regulations.

The fact is that the particular band is in third party management. KPMG, a very outstanding accounting firm, is looking after the management on our behalf. I think those issues will be resolved over time.

**Mr. Reed Elley (Nanaimo—Cowichan, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, third party management is not the answer to my previous question. It is not working in the Sagkeeng. This is the second third party managers it has been under. It is still not getting to the bottom of the corruption.

I have talked with the people of the Sagkeeng. They are fed up with this system which makes band elites rich and keeps ordinary aboriginals poor. They are also demanding a forensic audit. What prevents the minister from doing his job? Could it be the connection between the Fontaine family and the Liberal Party?

**Hon. Robert Nault (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether it is even worth trying to answer a question as ridiculous as that one.

Let me try to put it to the member very clearly, as I know he has still not had his briefing and he could use one desperately. If he is going to ask such stupid questions he should at least get briefed.

**The Speaker:** We will not proceed with that kind of discussion.

\* \* \*

[*Translation*]

#### MINISTER OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday at the University of Toronto, the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs made the statement that “those Quebec sovereignists were blackmailing Canada”.

How is it that the minister can say such a thing when it is a well-known fact that the sovereignists have never used blackmail, and that the federalists invented, and used for the first time on Quebec, the concept of holding a knife to our throats?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is misinformed. I did not say what he attributes to me. There is, moreover, nowhere he could have found such a quote.

**Mr. Richard Marceau (Charlesbourg—Jacques-Cartier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, is the minister going to acknowledge that, when it comes to blackmailing people, he has no right to preach at anyone when he was quoted a few years ago as saying “The more it hurts, the less support there will be for sovereignty”?

**Hon. Stéphane Dion (President of the Queen’s Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is quoting me totally out of context, and he knows that very well.

\* \* \*

[*English*]

#### NATIONAL DEFENCE

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the proposed national missile defence system would play an integral role in protecting Canada’s security interests.

Our strongest ally needs our support and wants our support, but the Prime Minister continues to dodge this issue. Canada could have considerable influence if the government would get off the fence and commit its support to the defence of our country and our ally.

Will the government take a proactive role and support the national missile defence system? Yes or no.

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member asks for more than the United States has asked for. It has not asked us for our endorsement.

In fact it has made clear to us that it is still in the process of determining what missile defence will look like. It intends to discuss it not only with us but with its other NATO allies and with Russia and China as well.

**Mr. Art Hanger (Calgary Northeast, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, the minister knows full well that Canada has been dragging its heels on this whole issue for some time now. In fact the Americans are looking for some sort of response from Canada and they are not getting it from the government.

The U.S. has embarked upon a proactive defence shield. Instead of weapons of mass destruction as a deterrent, the national missile defence proposes to destroy a nuclear warhead, thus saving lives and certainly preventing untold destruction.



*Oral Questions*

Will the government stand up now in support of the national missile defence program and our national security?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** You know, Mr. Speaker, there may well have been a fly on the wall at that dinner with the president but it sure did not look like the hon. member. The United States has not asked us to do that. In fact the claims he makes about this system have not been proven yet technologically.

• (1455)

The previous U.S. administration chose specifically not to make a decision on it. The current one is saying it needs time in order to decide what it is that it intends to do, and then it will consult with us. I think that is a reasonable approach for our closest ally to take with us. We intend to use that time to consider what it proposes.

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**CANADA POST**

**Mrs. Marlene Jennings (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister of public works about the status of a complaint filed by two Canada Post employees and the former president of Alliance Quebec, alleging that Canada Post in Montreal violates the language of work provisions of the Official Languages Act.

It is clear that Canada Post must respect the law, and this includes the Official Languages Act adopted by parliament over 30 years ago.

What progress is Canada Post making to address the rights of its French speaking employees outside Quebec and its English speaking employees inside Quebec?

**Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Minister of Public Works and Government Services, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me say that Canada Post has reduced its number of complaints by 70%. Canada Post is working with the Commissioner of Official Languages concerning the specific complaints and other complaints from across the country.

There is a plan in place that the Commissioner of Official Languages has accepted, is pleased with and continues to work with. The objective is to make sure that there are no complaints and that all citizens have its services in their official language.

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**HEALTH**

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, just last week a young mother in Barrie, Ontario, found a free youth conference on the Internet that was supported by Health Canada.

Let us imagine her surprise when she sent her 14 year old daughter there and found that one of the workshops was on safer sado-masochism. Do the Liberals think that is a good use of Canadian taxpayer funds?

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I will be happy to take the question as notice. First I want to check the facts of this matter.

**Mr. Grant Hill (Macleod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, this is not too tough for the Deputy Prime Minister. Here is a conference supported by Health Canada. This conference is free for youth. A 14 year old goes to that conference and is presented with a workshop on safer sado-masochism.

Does the Deputy Prime Minister support that use of taxpayer funds? Yes or no.

**Hon. Herb Gray (Deputy Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, in spite of the artificial indignation of the hon. member I think the prudent thing to do is to check the facts of the situation. Obviously we do not support anything involving abusive material for young people.

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[Translation]

**SINGLE CURRENCY**

**Ms. Francine Lalonde (Mercier, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, tomorrow, the American President, George W. Bush, is to meet the Mexican President, Vicente Fox, in Mexico.

Former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lloyd Axworthy, said in an interview today “The question of a common currency should certainly come up”.

Will the minister finally admit that his government’s refusal to address the question of a single currency excludes Canada in a way from the major hemispheric debates and explains in part the lack of vision criticized by the former minister?

**Hon. John Manley (Minister of Foreign Affairs, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I think the matter of a single currency raised last summer by Mr. Fox is an issue he has considered for the past 25 years.

**Some hon. members:** Oh, oh.

**Hon. John Manley:** It is a long term vision. He mentioned other very long term aspects of North American relations.

For us, there are a number of more important things in the short term with respect to trilateral relations among the U.S., Mexico and Canada.

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[English]

**THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Mr. Andy Savoy (Tobique—Mactaquac, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday the Minister of the Environment tabled the sustainable development strategies for 28 government departments and agencies.

Is the Minister of the Environment able to tell the House what these strategies will accomplish?

• (1500)

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of the Environment, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the 28 sustainable development strategies tabled yesterday are designed to ensure that federal departments and agencies consider the environment, the economy and society in all policy and program decisions, and do so in an integrated manner.

The strategies will greatly assist in achieving the commitments Canada made during the 1992 earth summit.

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### BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. Chuck Strahl (Fraser Valley, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, as usual on Thursday the country is aflutter in anticipation of what the government House leader might have in mind for us for business for the rest of today and for the next week. Could he tell us what that would be?

**Hon. Don Boudria (Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to answer the Thursday question of the hon. opposition House leader.

This afternoon we will continue with the Bloc opposition day.

On Friday, tomorrow that is, we will debate second reading of Bill C-3 respecting Petro-Canada. Should that item conclude, I do not foresee calling any other business for tomorrow.

Next Monday we will debate Bill C-4 respecting the sustainable development foundation. This will be followed by Bill C-5, the species at risk bill.

Next Tuesday will be an allotted day.

Next Wednesday we will return to the species at risk bill that is to be started on Monday, or commence it if it was not begun at the earlier session I have just described.

On Thursday of next week at 10 a.m. there will be a special joint sitting of the Senate and House of Commons in the Commons Chamber to hear an address by the prime minister of Britain, the Right Hon. Tony Blair.

My present intention for Friday of next week is to call the marine liabilities bill.

**Mr. Peter MacKay (Pictou—Antigonish—Guysborough, PC):** Mr. Speaker, with respect to the Thursday question and the government House leader's intention of calling the bill on endangered species, could he inform the House if he will be sending it to committee before second reading?

With respect to the Brazilian mad cow fiasco, the government should be willing to tell Canadians whether it will follow science or politics. The committee could only engage in the question before second reading. Is the government willing to do that?

### Supply

**Hon. Don Boudria:** Mr. Speaker, there were a variety of topics in the same question. My understanding is that the issue of mad cow disease is a decision of the agriculture department, and the species at risk legislation would hardly deal with that. As far as I know, cows are not yet an endangered species in this country.

Regarding Bill C-5 and the status of it, I understand on one occasion in the past it was dealt with at committee before second reading. I am still verifying whether it should be reintroduced in that manner. The present intention, unless I get additional information, is to proceed in the usual manner with committee meetings following second reading because the other process has been utilized in reference to essentially the same bill once already.

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

### SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS

The House resumed consideration of the motion, and of the amendment.

**The Speaker:** When we interrupted debate to go on to question period, the hon. member for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot had seven minutes left.

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is reasonable albeit a bit short for such an important debate on the transparency of the negotiation and ratification process of trade deals, and in particular the upcoming agreement on the free trade area of the Americas.

Before question period I was talking about the lack of public confidence. Every time an international summit is held, there are huge demonstrations.

• (1505)

A lot of people take to the streets, not only professional demonstrators, but also representatives of ordinary citizens who are fed up with negotiations being carried out behind closed doors and taking the country down the wrong road without the public's knowledge.

Let me give an example. We happened to find out recently that, for the last two years, the OECD countries have been negotiating behind closed doors an agreement promoting freer investments throughout the world. We talk about the multilateral agreement on investment, but no one in this House, not to mention the public,

*Supply*

knew that, for the last two years, the OECD countries had been negotiating a multilateral agreement on investment liberalization.

It took a leak on the Internet to find out about the content of these negotiations, to find out what was being negotiated on our behalf. What was included in the agreement was very ugly.

For the first time, an international agreement would have given transnational corporations the power to do whatever they wanted all over the world, and it would also have given them all the benefits, while all the costs would have been supported by populations all over the world. That did not make any sense.

Under such an agreement, most of Quebec's strategic crown corporations, for example, would have been deemed illegal. Governments would have had their hands tied and would not have been able to implement, in compliance with major international agreements, economic policies like they do now. Luckily, there was that leak. But is it normal to have to rely on such leaks to know what is going on in the negotiations?

I find it hard to understand the Liberals' reaction in speaking against the motion before us, considering that precedents exist regarding what we are asking.

During the negotiations on the Free Trade Agreement with the United States and then the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico, debates took place, then the agreement or the "Act to implement" was introduced here. Debates took place in this House and amendments were proposed. Some of these amendments were even adopted by the House. I am thinking, among others, of the amendment made to NAFTA in 1993 to exclude water exports from the agreement. That amendment was proposed in the House. It was adopted and included in the act to implement the free trade agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico.

Why this reluctance? Do they want to do what was done with the MAI? Do they want to negotiate behind closed doors, prevent us from knowing the outcome of these negotiations and then present the agreement to us as a *fait accompli*, without any debate, without ratification by this House? This does not make any sense.

One wonders what is going through the Liberals' minds. Do they want to ignore the precedents of the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, the precedents of debate and ratification by this House, and the precedents of approval, even of the amendments introduced here, which was allowed when NAFTA was signed? Do they want to change the rules? Do they want to do as the former Minister for International Trade did when he kept the negotiations on the multilateral agreement on investment under wraps for two years? He kept the House in the dark.

Is that what the Liberals have in mind for the free trade area of the Americas agreement? Is that what the Liberals have in mind for

the next World Trade Organization agreement? We will not stand for it. We cannot. And that is the purpose of our motion.

We want to ensure that the government respects the precedents of the FTA and NAFTA, that it allows debate on the final agreement and on the implementing legislation, and that it allows amendments to be made if there is anything amiss in these agreements. We are here to represent the public; we are not here to kowtow to the powers that be in this government, the people negotiating on our behalf behind closed doors. Those days are gone. We want transparency here.

We also want the basic texts to be made public, and we do not mean posted on the government's darn web site. Government propaganda is not what we want. We want the basic text on which the discussions are based.

If this sort of problem had not arisen in the past, the Prime Minister would not have said himself on October 11, 1999, with reference to the negotiations in Seattle:

Canada proposes that the ministers in Seattle undertake to improve the organization's transparency.

• (1510)

If transparency was not a problem, the Prime Minister would not have raised the issue on October 11, 1999. Again I quote:

With very limited exception, working papers, formal contribution from members, draft meeting agendas and minutes will be circulated as unrestricted documents—

That means the documents will be made available to the public.

—as soon as available in all three WTO languages.

If transparency had not been a problem, the Prime Minister would not have said that. Canadian officials would not have said that either. Why then, when we ask for more transparency, are we told that everything is hunky-dory and that we just have to go on the web site? Whom are they kidding? I hope the Liberals will support our motion.

If they do not, it will mean that, unlike the Conservatives with the FTA and NAFTA, they are going to bypass parliament with regard to the implementation act. They will say no to any sensible amendments we might introduce. It would be an extremely serious attack on democracy. This would send the message that the MAI process would apply to the FTAA. This means there is a total lack of transparency; it is hypocrisy behind closed doors.

When we look at the nine discussion tables, we see that they are dealing with issues such as culture, education, and intellectual property. In Quebec, we will not let the government pull the wool over our eyes.

*Supply**[English]*

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is rather amazing to hear the degree of contradiction one is hearing today in debate from the Bloc members.

One member, on the one hand, says he cannot find the website or that there is nothing on it. However the member who just spoke makes direct reference to the website. Which is it? Is the Bloc aware there exists a website that is visited constantly by Canadians on a day to day basis? Is the Bloc aware of that? Is the member not aware that he seems to contradict himself?

One the one hand he calls for more consultation with Canadians and for transparency. On the other hand he seeks to circumvent that and wants to see the government's final positions right now. He cannot have it both ways. Which is it?

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Yvan Loubier:** Mr. Speaker, we are not stupid. Between what can be found on a web site, which is government propaganda on general public policies, and what is discussed at the negotiation tables based on official position statements, there is a world of difference.

We want a look at these official statements, not the government propaganda. We have always had access to government propaganda. We do not believe in it.

I know what I am talking about because I was at the eighth round of negotiations at the GATT now known as the WTO. Between what we were told by government officials and what was written in the public documents—there were no web site at the time, it happened too long ago—and what was actually negotiated and the statements that were made, there was a lot of difference and even some contradiction.

Let me point out one of them. With regard to agriculture, we were supposed to stand for supply management and the control of the volume of milk product imports at the Canadian border. At the same time, Canada was part of the group trying to eliminate the supply management system in the milk industry.

Talk about trying to reconcile the irreconcilable. What we want to know is what is really being negotiated. We do not want to see the propaganda. What we also want, and I hope the government has not changed its mind and will not act differently than the Conservatives did, is for the implementation bill to be introduced in the House before the agreement is ratified and for us to be able to amend the legislation. Mistakes are bound to happen.

They cannot claim to have a monopoly on truth. We should also have our say on this issue. We represent the civil society. We have just been elected to represent people. We are not greenery. That

accounts for the erosion of trust in the population. People show up to vote, but for whom? For people who will fight for them and will inform them.

Supranational organizations account for roughly 50% of public affairs. Our future is determined by those organizations, and we do not have a say. It is determined by people like Mr. Johnston, from OECD, who is abysmally arrogant. He told us that he would force the MAI down our throats and that we would have no choice but to accept it. It was negotiated, it was a done deal.

- (1515)

But we have news for them. With the MAI, we have shown that the civil society and the population are able to make unacceptable agreements fail. We will do the same with the other agreements, but we must be given the opportunity to do so.

We cannot always count on leaks on the Internet. The members on the other side of the House have to be transparent and honest.

*[English]*

**Mr. Pat O'Brien:** Mr. Speaker, I simply cannot resist this. Having lived through two referendums on the future of this country in the province of Quebec, to hear the member repeatedly use the word propaganda, I am sorry, but it is pretty tough for most Canadians to sit here and listen to that kind of nonsense without reacting to it.

I know exactly what the member wants. His colleagues have made it clear all day. They seek to change the constitution of Canada on the fly. They want something done which has never been done in the history of this country. That is all they want.

They want us to table the legislation in its draft form. That has never been done in the history of this country. The government will continue to follow the established process. It will continue to consult widely with Canadians in every province, including the province of Quebec, but it will not accede to this request because this request is totally out of line.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Yvan Loubier:** Mr. Speaker, what he is saying makes no sense. It is totally stupid to claim that the constitution has to be changed if a bill is to be introduced on the implementation of a free trade agreement within the Americas. That was negotiated under the Progressive Conservatives with the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, and with the free trade agreement between the United States, Canada and Mexico. The agreements were debated in the House and amendments were accepted.

To quote one of these, if I may, from May 25, 1993. Mr. Barrett, seconded by Mr. Angus, proposed the following amendment: "Notwithstanding subsection (1), nothing in this Act or the Agreement applies to any water transported by a pipeline or diverted by



*Supply*

reason of the diversion of a river". This was moved and adopted in the House. We amended the free trade agreement Implementation Act with the United States and Mexico. We did not amend the Constitution.

They are completely off the rails. I have never seen such a thing.

[*English*]

**Mr. Steve Mahoney (Mississauga West, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have an opportunity to speak to the motion. Let me at the outset tell you that I am very strongly opposed to the motion for one fundamental, basic reason, that is, there is a hidden agenda behind it that frankly is not so hidden.

I think we all know, in fact, that the Bloc believes Quebec should in an official capacity be sitting at the table whenever Canada is negotiating international contracts of any nature. We all understand that the men and women in that party are devoted to a sovereign Quebec, devoted to separating, even though the people of the province of Quebec have clearly indicated that they do not support that view, on a number of occasions.

Also, all of the polling data that could be made available to the members opposite, which they choose to ignore, shows that the people of Quebec are much more interested in the same issues that affect the people of Ontario, British Columbia, Newfoundland, Alberta and wherever you want to go in this country. Those issues are jobs, the future of the country for their young people, education, and the number one issue of vast majority of Canadians, health care and what is happening in health care.

When we talk about these international trade negotiations it is important to understand that the motion before us today in fact refers to a draft agreement. It does not refer to a final agreement that has been hammered out and that perhaps before it is signed should come here, but to a draft agreement, which would mean that every amendment, every piece of negotiating material, every change, every bargaining chip, in fact the entire negotiation process, should be subjected to a debate and a vote in this place.

• (1520)

On the surface Canadians might say that I have been elected as a national politician to represent the interests of all Canadians from sea to sea to sea. If there is a negotiating committee that is meeting with Chile, for example, to negotiate some kind of a free trade agreement, or with any other country, Canadians might ask why, as a national politician elected to protect the views of all Canadians, I would not want the opportunity to vote on whether or not we should sign that document. On the surface some people might say that is a reasonable position, but in practical terms let us visit what might happen in that particular scenario.

There are 301 members in this place, 172 of which were elected to form the government. In fact the actual government is the Governor in Council. It is the Prime Minister and the cabinet. Everyone understands that. A member of the Liberal backbench is in fact a member usually in support of the government. A member from one of the other four parties in this place would be defined as a member opposed to the government.

It is the duty and obligation of Her Majesty's loyal opposition to hold the government accountable, all the opposition, even the Bloc, which might not recognize the authority that comes originally from Westminster and now from the constitution of the country. However, is it their obligation, their duty, to simply create gridlock either in the House of Commons or in the ability of our trade negotiators to negotiate when working around the world?

In fact, I think the opposite is true. It is the duty and the obligation of all elected members in this place, regardless of where they are from in the country, regardless of what political philosophy they have, to ensure that we do indeed wind up with the best possible negotiated trade agreement.

That does not mean that we can somehow, in some arrogant, flamboyant way, say to the people in the Americas that they are going to do it our way or the highway. As we can imagine, since there are 301 members in this place there could be 301 different opinions on any given day on any given subject.

The frustrating part is that much of it is driven by misinformation. Much of it is driven because the opposition indeed sees its role to be more than just opposing the government. The opposition parties see their role as that of taking any opportunity they can to embarrass the government, hence all of the personal attacks against the Prime Minister. Instead of dealing with the nation's business, what do we hear in question period? We do not hear the Leader of the Opposition standing in his place asking the government about help for farmers or about a housing policy, things that we in this caucus ask our leadership about all the time. We do not hear that.

The nation's business is taking a back seat in the House of Commons in this particular session. It is being replaced by mudslinging and the lowest form of politics that exists in this great democracy, which is personality attacks and personal attempts to assassinate a member of the House who happens to be the Prime Minister.

**An hon. member:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** It is true. Members can disagree, but that is the strategy. I do not necessarily include the Bloc in that strategy because it seems to be an unholy alliance between the Canadian Alliance and the Conservative Party. It is interesting to hear their

comments when they say that not only must justice be done, it must be seen to be done, and not only must a government be above the law, it must be seen to be above the law.

• (1525)

What does that mean? That means they have no proof there is anything going on here that is against the law, so what they want to do is create some kind of an atmosphere, some kind of an insinuation, some kind of an attack. It is a fishing expedition.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I hate to tell my colleague on the other side, but he is totally off track on what the subject is of today's debate over here. He is not discussing the motion. I wish to bring that to your attention.

**The Speaker:** My recollection is that the hon. member is talking about something to do with bringing bills before the House which deal with international trade matters. It seems to me that has some relevance to the issue before the House, perhaps not as direct as some might like, but it has something to do with the issue before the House. I know the hon. member for Mississauga West always like to tie his remarks together and I am sure he will do that.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for your ruling. What is interesting is that the relevance to using the example of what the opposition is doing—at least the official opposition—is that they are distracting from the issues we should be dealing with. In fact, I will say that at least the Bloc has put on the table today an issue that deals with some free trade negotiations and agreements and that is not necessarily the mudslinging we have seen from the Leader of the Opposition and members of the Canadian Alliance and the Progressive Conservative Party.

The relevance is about one simple fact, the point that I made earlier, that is, it is the duty and the obligation of the opposition to hold the government accountable, not to climb into the gutter, not to wallow in the political malaise that we see in this place, but rather to put forward ideas that can be debated, even though I believe the Bloc has a hidden agenda, which is always tied around the sovereignty of Quebec. It always comes back to its ability to somehow control the agenda on behalf of one province. Instead of dealing with nationhood, instead of dealing with nation building, instead of dealing with international responsibilities, it is always and only their focus to bring it right back to la belle province. Frankly, I think that in regard to the people of the province of Quebec the Bloc misreads what those people want.

The motion that is before us is more constructive, at least, than the nonsense we have been hearing from the official opposition and others in this place, but it is terribly misguided.

Let us just think about trade. In my riding of Mississauga West I cannot imagine what would happen in our economy if we did not

### *Supply*

have a free trade agreement and an ability to do business with the United States, with Mexico and with all parts of the world. My riding is the head office capital for Japanese head offices in Canada. I think we have over 85 of them in the city of Mississauga, not just in my riding, but in the entire city.

Should we have some kind of a trade relationship and, if so, are we then going to bring it into this place instead of allowing the professional negotiators to do the job? There are 34 countries negotiating an international trade agreement involving Canada and the Americas. There are 34 countries. Imagine the meeting. There would already be two or three negotiators from each country, I am sure, perhaps more. There would be a bevy of staff and advisers sitting behind them trying to help them on various points.

They have obligations. This is not just about Canada. Certainly our role is to defend the interests of this country, but is it not in the interests of Canadians and everyone in this country to ensure that prosperity, good quality education, good quality health care and a good standard of living are made available to these other countries? I think it is a benefit to us.

• (1530)

If they will not accept that it may be a global social responsibility to share our tremendous wealth, ideas and capabilities, then they should look at it from a purely selfish point of view, a business point of view.

Our Prime Minister, as we all know, is in China. The headlines indicate he is talking pretty tough about human rights violations. However there are people who would say, particularly on the left of the political spectrum, that he is not tough enough and that he should stand up and tell the 1.2 billion Chinese they had better do it our way.

Instead there have been constructive attempts to share some of the benefits that have come out of what is frankly the greatest democracy in the world: Canada. Let us think about how tolerant we are. Let us think about the Council of Canadians and Maude Barlow, who once unsuccessfully ran for a Liberal nomination and who might have wound up in this place. I am sure she is a talented individual.

Somehow that group has deemed to take it upon itself to tear down every trade agreement and to march in the streets arm in arm with the New Democrats to say that it is awful. That group says we are giving away our water, giving away our culture and giving away our sovereignty. It says we are giving and giving and giving.

We are not doing any of that. In fact we are sharing our technology. We are sharing our abilities. Yes, we will share from time to time some of our resources in return for sharing some of theirs. It is quid pro quo. It is not rocket science. If we negotiate trade agreements with countries in the Americas that can improve

*Supply*

their standard of living, then we should just follow that bouncing ball.

If we improve the standard of living in Guatemala, for example, what are we doing? We wind up putting more money in the pockets of people in that nation. We wind up creating jobs in that nation. Then what happens? They buy Canadian products. They buy Canadian technology. They buy Canadian expertise.

Do we think that in the year 2001 we could somehow build a wall? In Alberta they call it a firewall. Alberta would like to put up a firewall, whatever that means, so it can somehow stop the chuckwagons from coming from eastern Canada and ramming things. It is ridiculous.

We saw members of the official opposition attending the founding meeting of some western separation party. I forget their ridings, but to see Bert and Ernie, or Homer and Bart Simpson, or whoever they were, going to that meeting was absolutely shameful. They should have gone to the meeting and said that it was silly, that they were Canadians first, because that is what Albertans believe.

We have all seen the latest polling data. Some of the separatists involved continue to flex their muscles in spite of the fact that Albertans have ranked the Leader of the Opposition lower than just about anyone else in the country last, in fact, in approval ratings. They cannot take western Canada cannot of the country.

**The Speaker:** I know the hon. member for Mississauga West is doing his best, but the motion does deal with NAFTA and trade. I think perhaps he is straying just a little far off topic. I invite him to return to the subject of his remarks that he was giving earlier.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, I liked your former ruling better than that one. I appreciate your direction. I get a little excited from time to time when I go down the path of some of the irresponsible behaviour I have seen in this place. I am pleased to come back.

With due respect, Sir, I do not think I strayed too far. The issue is how we negotiate agreements with other countries and put the best interests of Canadians forward. We have heard from members of the Bloc today that it is some secretive process that never sees the light of day. I guess they do not have computers. I am sure that as members of parliament they have a budget, as we do, which would allow them to have computers. They could probably afford, in their members' operating budget, to tap into that new scary thing called the web.

• (1535)

If they want to know what is going on, all the data is on the web for all to see. It is there for all Canadians and not just for members of parliament. If the members want to create gridlock they can ignore that. If they want to know what is happening with questions

they have in the House, they have an opportunity in question period to stand and ask the Minister for International Trade what is going on with the negotiations.

Opposition members of parliament have opportunities to seek out meetings with members of the government. I am quite sure government members would be more than prepared to meet with the critic or a group from the opposition side.

We have a parliamentary secretary who is second to none in this place. He is the member for London—Fanshawe, and he would be more than delighted to sit and explain what is going on in relation to the negotiations. All they have to do is ask.

The hon. members do not have to put forward a motion stating that somehow, sitting at the centre table in here, we will do all the negotiating in this place. We all know what would happen. Everything would be blown out of proportion. There would be grandstanding beyond belief. People would play to the cameras instead of trying to resolve a deal that would be best for all Canadians.

It is almost trite, inconsequential and unbelievable to have to say that we live in a global economy, but obviously we do. We must be prepared to trade in the world, to trade aggressively and to put our best foot forward. We must give our negotiating team the ability to do that. We must not create gridlock by suggesting that somehow we will magically become experts in the areas of free trade and in negotiating international trade agreements.

Some people perhaps have a swollen opinion of themselves when it comes to their understanding and their capabilities. I trust the negotiators to come forward with a plan that will be in the best interests of the country. Our government has a very solid track record in that regard.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we are not here to try to polish our image. That is very clear. We are here to have intelligent debates in which we must respect other people's intelligence. It is very important to do that, because we are here to represent people who are also intelligent.

We should not be seen as stupid nor, indirectly, should those we represent be seen as stupid.

Our motion does not require any change to the constitution nor any major upheaval. We want a debate like the ones we had under the Conservative government on the free trade agreement with the United States and under the Liberals on the ratification of NAFTA. It was the Conservatives who negotiated the agreement, but it was the Liberals who, after spending years tearing their hair out and opposing free trade, ratified that agreement. They swallowed their pride and they passed the act implementing the agreement.

*Supply*

Under that process, implementation bills were introduced in both cases and were debated. Could someone tell us whether a parliament is still a place to hold debates and not a place to have spineless members who say “We are backbenchers, we cannot say anything”? It is unbelievable to hear such things.

Perhaps the member has no talent in international trade, as he has said himself, but he has a responsibility of properly representing those who elected him.

Could we just ask him whether he would agree, as happened with the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and the free trade agreement with the United States and Mexico, to a debate here, so amendments could be tabled and we could debate them in order to improve the agreement, if need be, before ratification?

They did it in the case of NAFTA. Why do things differently with the free trade area of the Americas? Why do things differently with the upcoming WTO agreement?

We have no pretensions. We just want to honour our responsibilities, to not have any tricks played on us, like the people of the industrialized world could have been with the multilateral agreement on investment, with their great friend Mr. Johnston, a man of incredible arrogance. He, with his nose in the air, almost right to the ceiling, said that it was already a *fait accompli*, that the people had simply to note the great negotiations held in order to look after the interests of the world’s multinational companies.

Things do not work like that in real world. We are here to represent and defend the interests of people and to ensure that everything that is negotiated is good for them.

• (1540)

[*English*]

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, maybe the hon. member did not hear the part of my speech where I said that at least the Bloc is putting forward an issue for debate that is important to all Canadians. I did not insult the intelligence of the members opposite. I think it is a legitimate issue to be put on the table.

I also said, however, that I fear the old hidden agenda of Quebec’s place at the table for international trade agreements. Sovereignty for the province of Quebec is always the motive behind everything that group of parliamentarians does. I find it regrettable.

Every agreement that has been signed, whether NAFTA, WTO, Canada-Chile or Canada-Israel, went through the exact process where negotiations were done by professional negotiators. That is not to say that I or others do not have expertise or interest. It is the old saying about a horse built by a committee becomes a camel. Let us imagine an agreement negotiated by 301 people in a public place like this. What in God’s name would we wind up with?

The process is that it will be negotiated. It will be brought into this place where our responsibility will be to debate it, to ratify it on behalf of the Canadian people and to ensure it is in the best interest of all Canadians.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to my colleague from the other side and as usual he got too excited and brought forward issues that had no relevance to the debate.

I want the member to confirm something he just said. If I am not mistaken I just heard him say that the treaty will come back to the House and be debated here before it is ratified. Is that what I heard the member say?

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, I am not excited at all. It may just be my normal glowing personality the member is referring to. I was saying that the standard process is that there is a negotiating team. In this case 34 countries are involved in the negotiation.

My point in relationship to the motion is that hon. members opposite would have us bring draft agreements and amendments into the House to debate them before there is any agreement between the chief negotiators of the 34 countries.

It is a recipe for gridlock. It is an impossible situation in which to put together a quality agreement. It would simply allow those who would to grandstand on issues. It would not work to the betterment of all Canadians in the international trade agreements.

We will follow the normal process that has been followed in the past and negotiate agreements in the best interests of the country.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, unless I am mistaken, the member is saying that in future all our problems will be solved by experts. What are we doing here then?

He said that we should not be asking questions, but that we should accept what the experts come up with. He says “What would 301 members of parliament at the negotiating table accomplish?” We are not asking for every one of us to take part in the negotiations.

I represent a riding, and Quebecers who want to know what is going on. The member says that we want to talk about health, education, labour. But what does he think is on the table when free trade agreements are negotiated? This will affect the future of all Quebecers and all Canadians. We have the right to ask questions. We have the right to know what we are getting ourselves into.

The member said that almost no one but those who voted for the Liberals deserve to run this beautiful country, Canada—or something like that, at the beginning of his speech—and that the opposition does not carry much weight.



*Supply*

What does the member think we are doing here in this House, if not representing a segment of the population that has questions to ask? It is not the people on your side who will have to field questions, but the members on our side.

**The Speaker:** I would ask the hon. member for Champlain to address all remarks through the Chair. The hon. member for Mississauga West.

• (1545)

[English]

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, I would invite the hon. gentlemen to maybe put himself to sleep tonight and get the instant *Hansard* and read it. He will find out that I said none of the things that he has accused me of saying.

In fact, the opposite is true. I said that I believe there is a clear cut role for the opposition in this place. The fact is that the Canadian people returned the Liberal Party, Jean Chrétien and this—

**The Speaker:** The hon. member for Mississauga West meant the Prime Minister, I sense that.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, I did, and my apologies. I know better. They returned us to government. We have a responsibility to govern.

I totally understand and appreciate the role of opposition. I said I had no difficulty with the fact that the Bloc put forward this kind of a motion. It is much more constructive than many of the others that we have seen. However, let us be clear what the motion says. It says that the House demand that the government bring any draft agreement on the free trade zone area of the Americas before the House. They want us to bring to the House a draft agreement, an amendment, a change or a negotiation point. It is a recipe for gridlock that will not be in the interests of Canadians.

**Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to come back to the question of my colleague. I distinctly heard the member say that this agreement would come to the House of Commons, would be debated in the House of Commons and would be ratified here. Would he go back over that statement and say whether or not that was accurate because I do not believe it is accurate. I believe it is completely wrong. It would make this motion redundant if in fact it were accurate.

**Mr. Steve Mahoney:** Mr. Speaker, the member understands the process. There is a negotiating team, in this case, with 34 countries. They will enter into an agreement. There is no question about that. Canada will be part of it. Before any implementation of that agreement, it will come back to this place, as every other agreement has.

Do not try to twist my words or anything that is going on in the process. It is standard with the FTA, or the WTO, or Chile or with Israel. This agreement will be done in exactly the same way.

I would also invite that member to read *Hansard*. There will be a lot of people falling asleep early tonight as they research *Hansard* to find out what was really said.

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

### COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

**Mr. Derek Lee (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, there have been consultations between the leaders of all the parties in the House and I believe you would find consent for the following motion dealing with a change in name to one of our standing committees. I move:

That Standing Order 104(2)(k) be amended by adding immediately after the word "Industry" the words "Science and Technology".

**The Speaker:** Does the hon. the parliamentary secretary have the unanimous consent of the House to propose the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

**The Speaker:** The House has heard the terms of the motion. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

**Some hon. members:** Agreed.

(Motion agreed to)

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## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

### SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY—FREE TRADE AREA OF THE AMERICAS

The House resumed consideration of the motion and of the amendment.

**Mr. Stéphan Tremblay (Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, today we are debating a topic which is of paramount importance to me since the summit of the Americas on the free trade area of the Americas will be held in Quebec City next April 20 and 21.

By an absolutely incredible coincidence, as far as I am concerned, this will also be a very important anniversary: on April 20 three years ago I attempted to initiate a crucially important debate on the social impacts of globalization. As you will recall, I attempted to raise the issue by walking out of the House with my seat, which I brought to my constituents.

The question I wanted to raise was this: in the context of globalization, what is happening to political power? The statistics show clearly that, in spite of the economic growth of the past few years, there is an increase in poverty.

This debate meant a lot to me then and still does. Whether we talk about globalization or “continentalization”, most of the issues are very similar. I have worked very hard for our role to be taken seriously, as well as for an in-depth debate on the revolution we are experiencing today. Who is in charge? Who is in charge of the political agenda? Is it the elected representatives, international bodies or the marketplace? These are very important questions.

• (1550)

I am convinced I am not the only parliamentarian who is wondering who is in charge of the world economic agenda. The mere fact that we are asking the question indicates that somewhere there is a lack of transparency or a lack of democracy.

I have a number of concerns regarding the future. As the youngest parliamentarian in this House, I did something very daring and I asked myself a number of questions. I believe there is now somebody younger than I am in this House. But I can still wonder about the kind of society I will be living in, 20 or 30 years from now, as the gap between rich and poor is getting wider and wider.

I do not like the term free trade area too much. Economic trade area of the Americas would be more to my liking. I am in no way against international trade. It is a very good thing. For one thing, I want to be able to have bananas, and I hope people in other countries will be able to continue to buy maple syrup. My example is somewhat trivial, but it shows how important international trade is.

What I do not like is the word free. Does it mean there are no rules? Certainly not. We need a trade framework and what I would call rules of the game.

Why should we have rules of the game? Because the economy cannot be set apart from the social issues. We cannot say that trade agreements do no concern people, that they are purely a commercial matter, while the social impact is something else. That is not true. Everything is connected, and that is why we need more extensive debates. Hence, the importance of this opposition day and, at the same time, the tragedy that we are having a single day of debate on this issue.

We should have more extensive discussions. We should have a debate on social values. We do not need to ask why people took to

### *Supply*

the streets in Seattle, in Prague, in Nice, or in Washington, and why they will do the same in Quebec City in April. It is because they are concerned. They are wondering, and they do not like the kind of society that seems to be emerging. I share their concerns.

I wonder what will happen if the economy is left to its own devices, if we have free trade everywhere. I think a free market system will only lead to increased competition. The question I ask myself is what the consequences of this increased competition will be.

I will point out some of the possible consequences. To be competitive, a business will probably try to hire the brightest people, which is very commendable. In this knowledge based economy, we all have that goal.

To lower its production costs, will this same business have a tendency to overexploit natural resources, to pay no attention to the environment, to lower salaries or to simply lay off workers? Another thing would be to try not to pay taxes. These are all things to be expected when a business wants to remain competitive.

I have nothing against competition, but I think there has to be a framework. In a free trade area of the Americas, we have to set rules, including social rules. In an economy which has a growing tendency to overheat and to skid, we must build safety rails to make sure we have a social safety net. We have to talk about health care, access to education, income security and environmental protection. These are all absolutely necessary.

I think this must be done through an open debate where both the public and parliamentarians have the opportunity to express their views.

• (1555)

My colleagues talked earlier about the multilateral agreement on investment. I hope we all got our lesson from what happened with this agreement that was negotiated behind closed doors and which parliamentarians were certainly not aware of. Fortunately, there was a leak. Things like that should remind us that it should not happen again.

Today, three years after this agreement failed, what are we doing? We are asking to see the documents, we are asking for parliamentarians to play their role and vote on the ratification of such an agreement. I find it almost absurd that we need to have this kind of debate, because it seems quite obvious to me. It is abundantly clear.

I feel there is still a long way to go. I think that we, as parliamentarians, have many questions to ask ourselves about the role we want to play in the globalization and continentalization of economies. As a member of parliament who was elected in a national forum, if I might say—every member of parliament in the world is elected to sit in a country’s parliament—I think reflection is in order.

*Supply*

Finally, the issue of parliamentary reform has been raised regularly. I believe a reform of parliament is absolutely necessary. However, a true reform would mean pondering the issues and developing measures in order to redefine the role of members of parliament in a context of globalization and continentalization. I would like to talk to parliamentarians from Chile, Argentina and Guatemala. I would like to know about their own reality and their own difficulties. I am convinced that most of them have the same troubles and the same concerns as all of us here.

As we enter this new millennium, this is how we should review the role of parliamentarians. It is not sufficient to meet with members of other parliaments over a drink once in a while. We should meet regularly. How will we deal with issues that go beyond our borders? When I say this, naturally I am thinking about international democracy, the democracy of the International Monetary Fund, of the World Bank and of the World Trade Organization.

I am also thinking about the regularization of capital markets and issues such as the Tobin tax for example, issues that have to be submitted to scrutiny by many countries and parliamentarians. There is the Internet, the environment, the incessant expansion of international crime, the anticompetitive rules and those transnational giants emerging more and more to become worrisome monopolies; there are ethics issues like genetically engineered organisms and biosafety. There are numerous questions that go beyond the boundaries of this parliament and that will have to be examined in a much broader context since we cannot escape globalization or continentalization.

This is all the time I had, but I will gladly answer questions.

[English]

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you on your appointment to the chair.

I listened to the comments of the member from the Bloc with some interest. I support his call for meetings of parliamentarians other than in this House of Commons. Is the hon. member aware that when the House is recessed in the month of March, there will be in this very Chamber a meeting of elected members of parliament from throughout the Americas? As a member of parliament in this House he is certainly more than welcome to participate and I hope he will have the chance to do so.

[Translation]

**Mr. Stéphan Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, yes, I am aware of it. I also know that there are some tensions between parliamentary groups, between COPA, FIPA and others, and it is unfortunate. Yes,

I will certainly attend the meeting. We should also think about how tough it is to hold these kinds of meetings.

I had the opportunity to attend two meetings of international parliamentarians, the first one when the agreement on the prohibition of anti-personnel landmines was ratified in Mozambique and the second one at the Forum of Federations at Mont-Tremblant.

• (1600)

I can say though that in such meetings it is hard to have in-depth ongoing discussions like the ones we have in committee where we meet once a week, on a regular basis.

There are still obstacles to be overcome but I will definitely take part in such events. In fact, I promote them. I said earlier that it was not just about having a few cocktails, but that it was important to be able to address major issues.

Will we one day have an assembly sitting not just a few days but several weeks? Are we moving toward some kind of continental parliament? I am not talking about a continental government, but rather a continental parliament or even a world parliament where we could debate these issues.

I do not pretend to have the answers to all these questions, but I think we should look to the future and find forward looking solutions to some of today's problems.

[English]

**Mr. Pat O'Brien:** Mr. Speaker, I did not take the member's question as rhetorical so I will respond by saying that given the number of bilateral groups that exist in various countries around the world, I cannot think of a nation that is more connected to the world scene than Canada. As a member of parliament, I feel that I have a tremendous myriad number of opportunities, as does my colleague, to have tremendous regular input with people from virtually every country in the world that we interact with.

The member spoke about a lack of consultation and things being done in secret. It boggles my mind to hear those kind of comments coming from the Bloc today. Indeed there were questions posed in question period that followed that misperception.

Is the member aware that there is a government website and that the government receives comments daily from Canadians, including from the province of Quebec? Is the member aware that the government continues to receive written submissions from NGOs and stakeholders?

Is the member aware that 10 days ago there was a meeting with the Minister for International Trade and the trade ministers of all the provinces, including the important province of Quebec, where

all these issues were discussed at great length? Is the member aware that the Minister for International Trade met in Quebec with NGOs such as Oxfam-Quebec. Is he aware of this extensive consultation?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Stéphan Tremblay:** Mr. Speaker, I know that this kind of consultation is, unfortunately, not necessary. I will give an example.

Last fall, there was a meeting of the ministers of finance and the governors of the central banks of the G20. At that time, the Minister of Finance, who defined the G20 as a kind of board of governors of the world economy, met with a number of NGOs, or non-governmental organizations.

I wanted to take part, but what was I told? “No, it is for NGOs only”. So there was no open debate. The media was excluded. There is still a long way to go before there is any real transparency.

**Mr. Bernard Bigras (Rosemont—Petite-Patrie, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to speak today on the Bloc Québécois motion calling upon the government to bring any draft agreement on the free trade area of the Americas before the House so that it may be debated and put to a vote before ratification by the Government of Canada.

I wish to begin by reacting to the comments by the parliamentary secretary informing us today in the House that there is an Internet site which provides a method of consultation with the public and the NGOs.

Naturally, I thank the Canadian government for making this available to Canadians and Quebecers. If it wants to be really transparent in its consultation mechanisms, however, let it make the Canadian position public before the negotiations.

• (1605)

There is, of course, a consultation mechanism. What we have been trying to find out for weeks in this House, however, is the real position of the Canadian government only a few months or weeks away from the summit of the Americas, to be held in Quebec City in April.

I am not opposed to free trade, let me point out, far from it. I am one of the supporters of more open trade with the world. Today, I want to share some concerns about social and labour rights. Later on, the hon. member for Laurentides will elaborate on these issues. I would like to focus my comments on my concerns about the protection of environmental rights.

With the summit of the Americas just months away, in light of how the texts of the multilateral agreement on investment were negotiated, in light... of the fact that we found out about the content of the negotiations on the Internet, and in light... of the secrecy surrounding the talks on NAFTA's environmental clauses, I have every reason to be concerned about the upcoming negotiations.

### *Supply*

The Bloc Québécois is asking the federal government to negotiate environmental clauses within the trade agreements. This is critical. Since it is important to know where we are headed, let us look at what was done in the past.

In the case of the free trade agreement with the United States, we will recall that the environmental issue was raised as early as in 1991. Thanks to the effectiveness and involvement of all these organizations, these NGOs, especially those from Canada and the United States, which were allowed to speak to some extent, a final text including several environmental clauses was ready by 1992.

So much so in fact that, at the time, the free trade agreement was dubbed the green agreement. Some were concerned that there would be a grey agreement. Quite the contrary. The so-called green agreement allowed a certain number of environmental provisions to be included.

I simply recall the preamble of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which states that the implementation of this agreement must be undertaken in a manner consistent with environmental protection.

I also recall article 104 of the Free Trade Agreement, which provides for the principle of primacy in the implementation and application of international agreements dealing with the environment.

I will mention two agreements, the Basel convention on the control of transboundary movements of hazardous waste and the international agreement on the environment. That is the Montreal protocol on the ozone layer.

Article 104.1 of the agreement provides for the upholding of these international agreements in the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement.

It can therefore be said that the North American Free Trade Agreement is open, that it contains environmental standards, and that it goes further as far as the environment protection standards are concerned. Further than the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, and further than the GATT.

Today, people would like to see an open debate take place. There is certainly room for improvement. I will come back to the Free Trade Agreement.

People would like to see a stronger article 114 in NAFTA. This article deals precisely with sanctions, the possibility of recourses in the whole issue of pollution havens, by discouraging polluters when they come to pollute an environment.

• (1610)

Moreover, we think that, in future negotiations, there should be a strengthening of what has been created in the Free Trade Agreement with the United States, the commission for environmental co-operation.



*Supply*

We want that commission to be strengthened and given a clearer mandate, so that it can offset the power of large industries and big corporations on the international stage. The commission must be strengthened and given the ability to set up inquiries and table reports more regularly. Important meetings must be held between trade and environment officials on the implementation of free trade agreements in order to integrate environmental concerns.

We also want, in the summit of the Americas negotiations, the relation between investors and governments to be taken into account. We are concerned. When we consider the legal situation, when we consider the current challenges under the North American Free Trade Agreement, particularly in relation to chapter 11 on the relations between investors and governments, we see that a number of environmental regulations, in all three countries, have been challenged by investors.

Some investors and some corporations feel the environmental legislation in all three NAFTA member countries is too restrictive and have decided to challenge it. We must be vigilant. An expert on free trade agreements said he was deeply concerned about this situation.

Currently, there are two trends in the negotiations of the agreements for the free trade area of the Americas. One is to isolate environmental questions by redirecting them to other forums, such as the WTO or the OAS. But a new approach is being developed in which the aim is to consolidate the whole environmental aspect of free trade agreements. We support this model.

What we want as well, is to renegotiate the clauses of NAFTA in order to exclude the whole issue of water as a natural resource. I understand that water is not currently a commodity, it is not considered to be such, but basically we want water, as a natural resource, not to be considered a commodity and not to become an item for export.

In closing, I will quote a former Premier of Quebec, now an expert on free trade, Pierre-Marc Johnson, who said recently:

The way to the next Summit of the Americas in 2001 in Quebec City is therefore unclear, and many obstacles to the inclusion of environmental issues in NAFTA must be removed.

In 1994, NAFTA was greeted as the greenest agreement in history. It remains to be seen whether history will repeat itself.

[English]

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I compliment the Bloc on bringing this important issue to the forefront.

I would like to ask the hon. member a couple of very important questions on the issue of globalization. We heard earlier today, and the government would agree, that much of the opposition to globalization and to the World Trade Organization, like we saw in Seattle, has to do with actual misnomers. Many of these organiza-

tions and groups are in fact opposing that which they claim they want to support, such as the poor, environmental rules and regulations, job protection, minimum wages and many other issues.

• (1615)

I wonder whether the hon. member is prepared to work with members from across the party line in developing a movement within the House so that we can get the truth out about free trade, and ensure that the WTO and other forums that are engaging in freer trade ensure that they have an open discussion on the issues of environmental protection, labour laws, rules and regulations, worker protection and many of these other issues?

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is taking words out of my mouth. This is the essence of the motion. I hope that if the parliamentary secretary wants to intervene during the time I am allotted, he will not repeat that there is already an Internet site. We all know as parliamentarians that the site exists. However, I would like this government after it has consulted NGOs and the public to make public the documents Canada will use in its negotiations at the summit in April.

We hope that, in the principles to be set forth and as part of Canada's position in the negotiations, which, unfortunately, seems to have been given over to professional negotiators, as the parliamentary secretary told us, we will find protection of social rights, of the rights of workers and of the environment.

[English]

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, my colleague made reference to NGOs and to the process of consultation.

Does he feel that it is necessary for the government to hear from NGOs and from civil society in the FTAA consultative process? Does he feel that that is a wise thing to do? If he does would he speak to his colleague in the Bloc who preceded him who, if I heard him correctly and I am sure I did, felt that it was not necessary to consult with NGOs? Is there a common voice from the Bloc today or am I hearing a contradiction?

[Translation]

**Mr. Bernard Bigras:** Mr. Speaker, I believe that the parliamentary secretary is distorting what my colleagues and the hon. member have said. He is probably referring to my colleague for Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot.

His government took part in preliminary meetings, among others, for the 1994 Miami summit. His government probably took part in four ministerial meetings, between 1995 and 1998, where some Latin American countries asked that NGOs be excluded from

the negotiations, saying that environmental NGOs had no business being involved in international agreement negotiations.

I wonder how the Canadian government responded to this demand, that NGOs not be involved in those negotiations, a demand made repeatedly by some countries that are now negotiating. What was the outcome? In Santiago, 800 NGOs from 34 countries expressed their concern that environmental and labour provisions would be excluded from negotiations.

It is not the members on this side of the House who opposed the participation of NGOs, it is the government, which did nothing to counter some countries' demand that NGOs not be involved in the negotiations. The hon. member will have an opportunity to answer my question, since this debate is not over yet. What was the Canadian position when some Latin American countries asked that the NGOs not be involved in the negotiation?

[*English*]

**Mr. Larry McCormick (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you as the Deputy Speaker of the House. I am very proud to see you sitting there.

I would also like to thank the people of Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington who have chosen me to represent them for my third term. Thanks also to my campaign manager, Kathryn MacDonald, who did a terrific job. Thanks also to my HFL and A Liberal Association and each one of the several hundred volunteers who took part in the campaign, which makes this a very democratic process. A very special thanks to my number one supporter, my wife, Reta and our daughter, Kayla.

• (1620)

I will be sharing my time with my colleague, the member for the great riding of Waterloo—Wellington.

The Minister for International Trade has made excellent points in regard to our involvement in the free trade area of the Americas. Let me just reiterate that in the case of agriculture and agrifood, the FTAA offers opportunity to promote economic growth and prosperity in Canada.

From beginning to end our agriculture and agrifood system produces about 8.4% of the national gross domestic product, and accounts for about one in seven of all Canadian jobs. Canada's agriculture and agrifood sector provides more than \$120 billion in food products, both domestically and internationally. The agriculture and agrifood sector is a major player in contributing to Canada's economy.

An important part of that equation is trade. Trade has been and continues to be vitally important to the Canadian agriculture and

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agrifood industry. In fact, it accounts for a good half of all farm sales. Each year we export about \$20 billion in agriculture and agrifood products. With those sales, Canada's share of overall world agriculture and agrifood trade is edging closer to the ambitious goal set by the industry of capturing 4% of the world's agrifood trade by the year 2005.

With our relatively small population and our incredible capacity for agriculture production, it is only natural that Canada is a food exporter. This commitment to trade with nations around the world has put Canada at the forefront of the movement to strengthen the international trading system in agriculture and agrifood products. The new export opportunities trade agreements have provided for agriculture and agrifood products have created jobs and boosted economic stability, both in rural communities and urban centres.

The government is working on several fronts to increase trade in the agriculture and agrifood sector. The FTAA is one of those. The FTAA is an historic opportunity to unite 34 countries of the Americas in a vast new free trade area. It is a market with a combined population of more than \$800 million and GDP of \$17 trillion, and it is right in our neighbourhood.

It is only logical that we would negotiate an agreement that would enhance our trade and investment opportunities with our neighbours in the Americas.

Canada has truly become a nation of the Americas. As the Prime Minister once said "Geography has made Canada a country of the Americas. History, and especially recent history, has seen a steady growing sense among Canadians that our future is closely linked to that of our neighbours in the hemisphere".

By its very nature, the FTAA will achieve for exports of our agrifood products greater improvements in market access to the countries of the hemisphere where currently they face relatively high tariffs. At the same time, in the WTO negotiations we will actively seek to achieve a more level playing field through the elimination of export subsidies and the substantial reduction or elimination of trade distorting domestic support. We will continue to ensure that the ability of Canadians to operate the orderly marketing systems necessary for stability and profitability is preserved.

By participating in the FTAA, our overall objective is to deepen and broaden our relationship with the Americas. We just have to look at the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement, which became NAFTA in 1994 when Mexico joined, to see how Canada has benefited from previous trade agreement.

In 1989, the year the Canada-U.S. free trade agreement came into effect, Canadian agrifood exports to the U.S. were about \$3.6 billion. Ten years later they had more than tripled to \$13.2 billion. I should also point out that in 1989 we imported more agrifood

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products from the United States than we exported to them. Today we have a net agrifood trade surplus with the U.S. of more than \$3 billion.

• (1625)

While the FTAA may not produce the same magnitude of agrifood trade expansion as that which we experienced with the U.S., there is good reason to believe that the FTAA offers significant growth opportunities for our agrifood exports to the hemisphere.

These closer ties with other countries of the Americas are already paying off. Our two-way trade with Latin America and the Caribbean has more than doubled what it was five years ago. In total, Canadian investment in this region has reached \$15 billion.

Trade is crucial to Canada. It has created millions of jobs for Canadians and it will create millions more in the next century. With the negotiation of free trade spanning the Americas this prosperity will be shared throughout the hemisphere.

As host of the Summit of the Americas in Quebec City this April, Canada is taking a leadership role in ensuring that the FTAA negotiations will succeed to the benefit of all countries in the Americas.

I believe our efforts over the next few years will pay off in spades down the road, as people of every country in this hemisphere reap the benefits of increased prosperity through trade and investments. I look forward, as I know the Canadian agriculture and agrifood sector does, to continue to work and trade closely with our neighbours across the Americas. The fact is that establishing freer and fairer global agricultural trade is critical to the long term viability of our farms and the prosperity of our rural communities and indeed the country.

**Mr. James Rajotte (Edmonton Southwest, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I agreed with many of the comments the hon. member made.

Our agriculture and agrifood sector will benefit from lowering trade barriers. That is why the official opposition is generally supportive of liberalizing trade barriers which will allow for the freer flow of goods, services and capital. However, food producers and food manufacturers are interested in accountability and transparency in government.

This motion, which seems reasonable to me, is about not renegotiating the agreement but bringing it before the House. This would allow parliamentarians, the representatives of the people of Canada, to debate it, deliberate on it and either ratify it or not. Is that not our proper role? Could my hon. colleague address that question?

**Mr. Larry McCormick:** Mr. Speaker, we certainly must work to lower the trade barriers because our producers and farmers deserve

the very best opportunities that are available. They produce the finest products, the safest and the best food in the world. I can testify to that. The opportunities are there and they deserve them.

Our farmers have faced a real challenge in the last couple of years. Mother nature produced a lot of bad conditions for crops and the unfair subsidies from the EU and the United States have not helped either.

I would ask that we all work together on the FTAA situation so that we can benefit the producers and the people in the rural areas. Agriculture is very important to all people in Canada.

**Mr. Dick Proctor (Palliser, NDP):** Mr. Speaker, the member opposite mentioned in his response to the member from the Alliance the unfair subsidies from the United States. I am interested in that comment linked with his earlier comment during his speech wherein he said that trade with the United States had tripled over the last 10 years. I believe his figures were \$3.6 billion to something like \$13.2 billion.

One cannot help but wonder whether or not there is a relationship between the explosion in trade between the two countries and the fact that the Canadian government, because of that \$13.2 billion, does not want to get into any serious argument or challenge to the United States about unfair trade subsidies, which the member and the parliamentary secretary referred to.

I would like him to comment on that development and see if he agrees that it is unfair. If it is unfair, why is Canada not doing something directly about it?

• (1630)

**Mr. Larry McCormick:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my hon. colleague, who was a very valuable member of our agricultural standing committee in the last session, as I hope he will be this session.

I am not sure whether any one of us could do more about the unfair subsidies and the situation today than our Prime Minister has done. Our Prime Minister spoke first to President Bush about the situation facing our farmers in regard to the subsidies. Of course President Bush went on to talk about other things, such as what he wanted and what he wanted from us. Our Prime Minister told the president we could work on those things but that he first needed a commitment that we would work to make a more level playing field for our producers.

**Mr. Loyola Hearn (St. John's West, PC):** Mr. Speaker, I listened to the member talk about the movement of goods and services between countries. How does he rationalize his government's stand on the movement of hydro power from Labrador to the markets when the government has always opposed a power corridor through Quebec?

**Mr. Larry McCormick:** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the question and I also would support any agreements of any kind with our

provinces that would benefit the great province that the member represents, Newfoundland. I know we have barriers between provinces that are sometimes more excessive than those we have across the international borders, and I think it is something I would certainly support and work with.

**Mr. Lynn Myers (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I want to say what a great honour it is to follow the eloquence of the hon. member from Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, and I will tell the House why. It is that not only does he know what is in the best interests of his constituents in Ontario, but he also knows a great deal as parliamentary secretary about matters relating to agriculture, so I listen to him with great interest.

In fact, I was hoping to ask him a question, but of course other members preceded me. He certainly knows a great deal when it comes to agriculture so I was very interested in his comments. This is a very important issue in terms of the free trade agreement area of the Americas and the kinds of things that Canada needs to do with its neighbours in the western hemisphere. It is a dynamic region. It is something we need to ensure we in Canada do in the best interests of all Canadians.

As has been pointed out, the area itself has eight hundred million people. That is not even one-sixth of the world's population, yet they account for one-third of the world's economic activity. That is a great deal, and that is something we in Canada and we as Canadians need to tap into. It represents, as the hon. member preceding me indicated, \$11 trillion. The combined gross domestic product of the Americas, then, is greater than that of the European Union.

It is no wonder, then, that given all these facts the leaders of the western hemisphere believe in the potential here. What we want to do as Canadians and what we want to do as a country is ensure that we tap into this very important area and that we do so effectively on the social, the political and the economic fronts to ensure that we promote democracy, development and growth for all of us, in a manner consistent with what I believe are the values of Canada and ultimately the values that all of us can share.

At the Miami summit in 1994, the leaders ensured and endorsed a declaration and a plan of action that expressed a common commitment to strengthening democracy and creating greater prosperity for everyone. They also committed themselves at that time to practical measures to improve health care, to increase access to quality education and to protect biodiversity. They committed themselves to taking collective action against the scourge of drugs and corruption and to expanding and deepening dialogue with civil society on regional priorities.

At the second summit in Santiago in 1998, this was furthered. The co-operation that had existed in 1994 in Miami was developed

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even further, more in an incremental fashion but also in a manner consistent with the movement forward that we anticipated would in fact be in place. At that conference in Santiago, leaders once again endorsed action to support development of democratic institutions. Human rights, again a very topical issue, was at the top of the agenda. Also included was enhanced transparency. Of course with that, there was the respect for the rule of law. They gave specific instructions to begin the process of negotiating the free trade area of the Americas.

Once it is complete the FTAA will be the world's largest free trade area. That is something I believe that we in Canada need to keep in focus and keep in mind, because that is huge in terms of social, political and economic realities. We need to remember that.

• (1635)

In short, then, the summit of the Americas process offers numerous opportunities, not only for Canada but for the countries in the western hemisphere. I believe that in the process we will enhance the reputation of Canada and its ability to conduct business and do the kinds of things that are required. It is a huge tangible opportunity for all of us in this area. I think it underscores the commitment of the government, our Prime Minister, the cabinet and indeed all caucus members, to ensure that we export and do the kinds of things that are in the best interests of business and the people who work with business in Canada.

If there is one sector that I want to identify today during my time in the House, it is the service sector, and not only what it means for Canada but what it can do in terms of Canada exporting into that area.

I want to remind you, Mr. Speaker, and all members in the House that the service sector is a key engine of Canada's economy. It is responsible for more than two-thirds of Canada's GDP. We have to think about that for a minute. That is huge in terms of what it represents. Almost three-quarters of employment, 10,500,000 jobs and nearly 90% of all new job creation in Canada, is now directly related to the service sector. Why? It is clear. That is the kind of economy we are in. That is the kind of economy we stand to benefit by and indeed export to that part of the world. It is leading the transformation of the Canadian economy into a knowledge based economy.

More employees in the service sector are highly educated and enjoy high weekly salaries, for example, much beyond the average. Again that is something that underpins our economic security and stability. Services are at the heart of Canada's innovation system. For example, communications, financial services and technical business services are among the most innovative industries in Canada.

As a trading nation, Canada counts on service exports to other countries. In so doing, it strengthens the prosperity for all of us



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here in Canada. Not counting Canada's direct investment abroad in service companies, Canada is the twelfth largest exporter of services in the world. That is phenomenal if we really think about it. Canada exported \$51.8 billion worth of services in 1999 alone. Canadian companies such as SNC-Lavalin, Teleglobe, Enbridge and Hydro-Québec are among the world's leaders in their fields. Their expertise is sought around the world, and rightfully so, because they have so much to offer.

Though service exports only account for 12% of total Canadian exports, Canada's trade in services is increasing at a much greater pace than is its trade in other areas. Given the importance of trade for our country, we can say without fear of exaggeration, I believe, that improving market access for our service providers abroad is vital for our economy here at home and for the prosperity we enjoy.

The argument for supporting Canada's service exports is particularly eloquent when it comes to the Americas. Canada's commercial services exports to FTAA countries, excluding the U.S. and Mexico, were worth \$1.9 billion in 1998, up from \$787 million in 1993, which shows an increase of 19% in terms of what potential exists.

To wrap up, all I am saying by way of a quick conclusion is this. Countries like Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Venezuela, Columbia and Brazil are all key existing or potential export markets for Canada. This is something that all of us should be supporting. I hope that all of us in the House do, because it stands to underpin the very foundation of Canada's economy.

• (1640)

I know that at the end of the day people from wherever they are in Canada expect us as a government to ensure the prosperity and sustainability of the economy here in Canada. One of the best ways to do it is to open up the borders for trade and to export these kinds of things, and especially, as I pointed out, services, into the FTAA. As a result, all of us will prosper and benefit.

Let us join, then, with the hemisphere's leaders in having confidence in ourselves and our region. We now have the stability, the transparency and the economic growth record that will allow trade to increase and thrive. The countries of the region are good economic partners for Canada and for each other. At the end of the day not only they but we too in Canada will benefit. What does that mean? It is good news for Canada as a country and good news for all Canadians.

Let us get behind Canada. Let us support Canada in this all important effort and let us do the right thing. The right thing is to support the FTAA and to trade accordingly.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask the parliamentary secretary

two separate questions. The first one is easy. Will he pursue with his colleagues an aggressive removal of the double taxation that compromises the ability of our exporters to export our products internationally and impedes the ability of other countries to invest in Canada?

Second, we want free trade as well as fair trade. With the explosion of globalization we have had an explosion of international organized crime. Half the crime in our country today is attributed to organized crime. Will the Parliamentary Secretary to the Solicitor General of Canada ask his minister to work with the Minister of Foreign Affairs to take an aggressive approach, with other countries, and to start to take a leadership and international approach to deal with measures on organized crime?

Half the crime in our country is rooted in organized crime. This is not only a domestic problem but an international problem, which deals not only with money laundering but with narcotics, endangered species and weapons. We need to take a leadership role with our partners. Will the hon. member take this to his minister so we can take a leadership role with other countries?

**Mr. Lynn Myers:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for those two questions. First, on taxation, we as a trading nation have consistently put in place the mechanisms that allow us to trade in an effective and efficient manner and we will continue to do so. After all, that is who we are as a country and what we are all about: to trade and do it well. We stand to benefit so much by it. As a result of making sure that we have the kinds of vehicles in place to ensure that happens, we can do it and we can do it well. We have shown that time and again by way of trade and we will continue to work effectively in that area.

With respect to organized crime, we have taken and will continue to take the kinds of measures necessary to ensure that we do the right thing in this area. The member is right on in terms of it being a pervasive problem that goes to the very corruption that is often seen in a variety of areas.

We have worked with our American counterparts and we are working with others in this hemisphere and elsewhere around the world, for that matter, with Interpol and others, when it comes to putting in place the kinds of mechanisms and policing enhancement and requirements that underscore Canada's commitment to ensure that we do everything possibly we can with respect to ensuring that it comes to an end, at least as much as we can given the resources at hand and the partners we have. That is a commitment the government has given and it is one that we continue to stand by. I think it is important that we do so.

I want to say while I have the chance that I am a little disappointed in the Alliance Party for having zero position on this FTAA position. It is all very well for their members to get up and

question members while they are speaking and such, but I looked through the party platform, for example. Does the party have anything on FTAA? Not a thing. Zero. It is a little hard to take in the sense that one would think that of all people in the House their members would have a consistent position when it comes to trading, business, capitalism, prosperity, economy and profit making. No, they just do not have it. I was scrounging around trying to find it but it just does not exist.

• (1645)

The reform alliance people should get their act together. They should try to secure a position. Unlike what the former leader did in Hong Kong when he raked Canada over the coals, he and his new leader and the reform alliance people to a person should stand once and for all and be counted as defending Canada. They should stand and defend Canada's ability to trade and Canada's ability to do great things. They should be positive instead of always negative. That is their downfall.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to rise today to speak to the Bloc motion introduced by the member for Joliette, whom I thank.

When I heard about the draft motion asking “that this House demand that, in order to ensure openness, the government bring any draft agreement on the Free Trade Zone of the Americas before the House so that it may be debated and put to a vote before ratification by the Government of Canada”, a few images came to my mind which in my view should set the stage for our reflection.

This free trade agreement will have a significant impact for decades. As the father of three children aged 17, 15 and 10, I wonder about the environment in which our children will be living. Finally, this agreement will define the framework for the new economic reality, free trade across the three Americas.

When the time comes to decide on the framework within which this agreement will operate for several years to come, I want to ensure that the decision will be made by the elected representatives of the people, those who have the mandate not only to carry on trade, but also to see to the distribution of wealth in a continent-wide society, which is indeed quite important.

The second image that came to my mind when I read the draft motion was the member for Lac-Saint-Jean—Saguenay when, three years ago, he walked out of the House carrying his seat on his head to bring it to his constituents. His action created quite an uproar; it did not go unnoticed.

In the final analysis, it was a strong, profound and important symbolic gesture aimed at condemning the way globalization is

currently working, and the fact that elected representatives do not have enough of a say.

We can say that, a few months after the MAI negotiations, we had a narrow escape thanks to the action of the French prime minister, Mr. Jospin, that followed a more public action. The draft agreement had been posted on the Internet and people realized then that the agreement would have a significant impact on the sovereignty of states.

I would not like us to realize 10, 15 or 20 years later that we had rubber stamped something that would put the people of the Americas at a disadvantage, or that we had agreed to it after the fact.

I am a bit surprised at the Liberal government's attitude today, because it is already Canada's practice to examine this sort of issue in advance. The sort of examination that the Bloc Québécois is seeking today was conducted before the FTA and NAFTA were signed. It was done in the House. Now, the Liberals seem to be opposed.

It is true, however, that the two other agreements were not negotiated by the Liberals. They inherited these agreements, and, once in power, were obliged to sing a different tune in order to implement them, since they were already signed.

Still, I am a bit surprised at the Liberal government's attitude. It is important that we be able to express our views before the agreement is ratified, and that we be able to hold a full debate. A number of questions were raised here, and I would like to pick up on a few that strike me as important.

For instance, there was the whole issue of the working conditions of people within this free trade area. Will that be covered in this agreement?

• (1650)

In the speech he gave in Vancouver on February 9, 2001, the Minister for International Trade said:

In a globalized, increasingly interdependent world, each country's well-being will depend upon the health and vitality of markets abroad. Those conditions are best achieved in an environment of good governance and in stable, prosperous and open societies—

We are talking about governance and stable societies.

—conditions fostered by freer trade.

Nowhere in the speech by the Minister for International Trade concerning Canada as a backer of the FTAA are there any concerns of a social or environmental nature. These are the areas in which my constituents want to know the content of the agreement. Are there things that will affect us personally?

*Supply*

It is worthwhile heeding past examples. For instance, we have NAFTA with the United States, but were required to sign a separate agreement on lumber which forced four provinces to raise their royalty fees and their compensation payments.

Now we are in a situation where everyone in Canada wishes we could return to free trade per se. If we had negotiated a free trade agreement that did not give in so much to the Americans in this area, perhaps we would not have had to submit to this agreement on lumber. That is one concrete example. This means that the FTAA agreement will have an impact down the line on Rivière-du-Loup, La Pocatière, and everywhere else in Quebec and Canada. These are not sterile debates, but concrete things we are discussing, important matters that will make it possible, or impossible, for our families to have the proper social or economic conditions to develop their full potential.

What applies to our families applies also to those in other countries. This type of agreement is not entered into merely to increase Canada's market capacity. In my opinion, looking at it in this way does not augur well for sustainable development, a worthwhile and satisfactory future.

I have given the lumber example, but there are others. We have just been through the business about Brazilian beef. How will quality control of food products work within the big market of all the Americas? We need to know how the clauses have been negotiated in order to avoid sacrificing for market advantage the health of peoples in the various countries. Care must be taken to ensure that there is control, that a certain level of quality is respected, as we have tried to do within our sovereign states. There must be sufficient protection for the aspects we will have in common. Parliaments have a watchdog role to play in this, a role of representing the public. That is what the Bloc Québécois motion is drawing attention to today.

We talked earlier about organized crime. Indeed when trade is liberalized, it is clear that illegal things are permitted more easily because there are fewer bureaucratic constraints or basic ones like customs. That does not mean there must not be a free trade area of the Americas, but it must happen under reasonable conditions regarding justice and the environment as well as working conditions and there must be sufficient protection.

I find the position of the Minister for International Trade rather paradoxical. He says:

We know that increased trade is synonymous with more jobs for Canadians. We will create a unique occasion to unify the hemisphere as never before.

We would like to know what the Government of Canada thinks of the proposal of a common currency. Would this be negotiated, not necessarily for inclusion in the agreement itself, but in order to see how it might be managed in the future? It would transform economic relations between countries.

We are all entitled to ask these questions. People want to know that these issues are being defended.

In view of this, I think the Bloc motion is very justified, because it will ensure that the position of Quebec and Canada in the negotiations will be that of the public as a whole and that we do not end up with something that was negotiated on the sly.

We might avoid a few blunders and the positions involving trade taken by a department such as international trade. It would be tempered by social and environmental considerations, which will mean that, in the end FTAA will permit the sustainable development of the three Americas, will not be a tool just to promote trade solely for the benefit of certain businesses but will benefit all of the people of the Americas.

• (1655)

[English]

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I know the member asked a question about common currency. I would simply recall for him the words said earlier today during question period, if I heard them correctly, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, which were that this was not something that was of any interest to Canada now or in the foreseeable future. I think the Prime Minister made similar statements not too long ago.

I understand that the member has his own riding and indeed the province of Quebec where I suppose he is aiming message. However I have to take him up on the issue and ask him a question.

It is simply incorrect to say this deal is being negotiated in a back room. There has never been a wider consultation with Canadians on a proposed trade deal. The member knows full well that members of the Bloc had ample opportunity at SCFAIT, the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, to share their views, and they did so very aggressively and eloquently.

How can the member deny that input was provided? There have been wide and extensive consultations with people in Quebec, with NGOs and with ministers, including the minister of Quebec.

Does the member not understand that the process proposed in the Bloc motion is in direct contravention to the way all other trade deals between Canada and any other country have been negotiated?

The process that the government would seek to follow, in bringing a signed deal to the House of Commons for full review and possible amendment and then voting on enabling legislation, is

*Supply*

the exact process that has been followed for NAFTA, the WTO, the Canada-Chile agreement and the Canada-Israel agreement.

Would the member comment on that? Does he not see that it is the Bloc's motion, specifically the words "draft legislation" in the motion, that seeks to make a major change in the way Canada has done trade deals in the past?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Paul Crête:** Mr. Speaker, first of all, I am not impressed by the hon. member's answer on a common currency. A few years ago, his whole party was against free trade, and then it completely reversed its position.

It is just like the antimissile shield. A couple of weeks ago, when he met with the prime minister of Russia, the Prime Minister said that he was against that policy. When he met the American president, he was in favour. Now that he is in China, we do not know where he stands.

The Prime Minister and the Liberal Party can change their minds quite fast. He will soon realize, concerning the common currency, the proposal put forward by the Bloc Québécois a few months ago, that the American and Mexican presidents are now discussing it. Before long, the Prime Minister of Canada and the hon. member will have to apologize for what they are saying today.

Concerning the free trade agreement, the hon. member misunderstood my remarks. I never said it was negotiated behind closed doors. I said that the agreement that was negotiated did not include the right provisions.

If we want to take advantage of our past experience, we had better make sure the next agreement does not rely on the same type of relations with the Americans. Even if the United States is a major player, Canada and other sovereign countries must have a chance to be adequately involved.

In fact, if Quebec had been a sovereign country, we would not have acted like we did. We would have seen to it that we played a role that reflected our reality, in particular on the softwood lumber issue. We would not have had to deal with what Canada eventually imposed on us.

Today, the Bloc Québécois is not seeking to blame the government for everything it has done in the past. We are only saying that our constituents, our fellow citizens, want to know what these agreements are all about.

• (1700)

They have come to realize that, in the past, things were slipped by them from time to time. They do not want this to happen again. They expect members of parliament to do more than rubber-stamp the government's decisions. We should be able to exert some kind of influence to ensure that these agreements have human impact.

We should act as responsible elected representatives of the people in our society.

**Ms. Monique Guay (Laurentides, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me great pleasure to rise today in the House and speak to the motion introduced by the member for Joliette. This is a motion demanding that the government bring any draft agreement on the free trade area of the Americas before the House before ratification by the Government of Canada.

For a number of years now, there has been much talk about integrating the American continent. The free trade area of the Americas project is a very ambitious one.

The idea is to bring the various countries of the Americas together within one economic group and to implement a regional system based on the principles of rules of law, free trade and democracy, in order to raise the standard of living and improve working conditions so as to ensure sustainable development and respect for the various cultural entities. The free trade area of the Americas comprises the 34 democratically elected governments on the continent, representing a market of 800 million consumers, with a combined GDP of some \$10 trillion U.S.

This new economic entity could, without a doubt, cause major social and economic upheaval in the societies involved in this bold plan. But, despite the extreme importance of the undertaking, there is a breathtaking democratic oversight.

Again yesterday in the House, the member for Joliette asked the government to make public the basic texts of the free trade area of the Americas negotiations. Even the institutions committee of the Quebec National Assembly, a non-partisan committee it should be pointed out, tabled a report in June 2000 entitled: "Quebec and the Free Trade Area of the Americas: Political and Socioeconomic Effects". Unanimously, the committee asked "That the final accord of the free trade area of the Americas be submitted to the elected bodies of Canada before being ratified by the federal government". The government, as it so often does, gave us a nonsensical answer. But the question called for a very serious reply, because this is a very serious matter.

As a responsible political party, the Bloc Québécois demands total openness from the federal government in the negotiation of international agreements such as the free trade area of the Americas.

We democratically elected Canadian parliamentarians and representatives of the public, and civil society, have the fundamental right to know what is being negotiated on our behalf and on behalf of those who elected us and whom we represent here in the House of Commons. The participation of civil society in the planning and decision making processes is no longer merely something to be considered. It must be an integral component of world governance.

Since this government took office in 1993, the ratification process of international treaties and the democratic debates on the content of these treaties have been significantly shortened.



*Supply*

In order to put an end to these undemocratic practices, the Bloc Québécois tried to make the ratification process of international treaties by parliament more open and democratic by introducing, last spring, a bill to that effect, Bill C-214. Members can well imagine that the Liberals defeated this bill. Yet it provided—and this is only normal—that Canada could not negotiate or sign a treaty without first having consulted provincial governments, if that treaty dealt with a provincial jurisdiction.

Moreover, before being ratified, treaties would have had to be the object of a resolution in the House of Commons and the Minister of Foreign Affairs would have had an obligation to submit all the documents necessary for an informed debate by parliamentarians.

All that the Bloc Québécois was asking, and is still asking, was for the Liberals to respect provincial jurisdictions, as stipulated under the constitution. This is a brief outline of the issue of openness, as perceived by my party.

However, there is another issue in which I take a great interest concerning the negotiations on the free trade area that will take place at the summit of the Americas that will be held in Quebec City, from April 20 to 22. I am referring to anything that has to do with workers' rights.

• (1705)

Let us make one thing very clear right from the beginning. The Bloc Québécois demands that globalization and free trade be put in human terms. We want international treaties to include provisions to protect social rights and workers' rights, and direct reference to the obligation for nations to comply with the regulations contained in the ILO's seven basic labour conventions. These conventions have to be included in every commercial agreement that Canada signs.

Here is what these conventions say. Conventions 29 and 105 deal with the abolition of forced labour. Conventions 86 and 98 deal with the union rights pertaining to collective bargaining and employee organization, including the right to elect union representatives without any interference from the employer or the government, and the right to strike. Conventions 100 and 111 provide for equal pay for equal work and for the elimination of discrimination in the workplace. Convention 138 deals with the minimum age for admission to employment, or the abolition of child labour.

This is why we would propose to include the ILO's seven conventions on the fundamental rights of workers listed above in a continental agreement, thereby forcing employers and governments to comply with these conventions before they are allowed access to any benefits from the agreement.

Even today, on the issue of basic labour standards, there is still no link between international trade and the protection of the rights of workers.

Even though these seven ILO conventions have to be honoured regardless of a country's level of development, few countries are actually willing to allow the use of trade sanctions to enforce these standards. Moreover, the ILO has no power to force countries to endorse or to apply these standards.

Even more troubling is the fact that we still do not know if the Canadian government is willing to make the necessary efforts to ensure that social rights are respected.

As a matter of fact, last June, when he appeared before the Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Minister for International Trade stated that social rights had nothing to do with trade, adding that he could not do everyone else's job. Not only are these words troubling, but they are totally unacceptable and irresponsible.

In conclusion, I simply want to remind the House that, for the Bloc Québécois, there is a precondition attached to the ratification of any trade agreement Canada might sign, such as the one regarding the free trade area of the Americas.

Such agreements must include provisions of a social nature referring directly to the obligation of the states to abide by the rules contained in the seven fundamental conventions of the ILO. It is simply a matter of basic human rights and we just cannot let it get away from us.

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup—Témiscouata—Les Basques, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the speech of my colleague, who is the Bloc Québécois labour critic.

Indeed, in this sector of activity, it is obvious that, in their original version, the free trade agreements that we have had in the past did not include a provision, a specification or a chapter that defined these conditions in an acceptable manner.

I spoke on an issue relating to fair trade, among other things, to ensure that, in our trade with other countries, the people with whom we do business will hire the employees, provide them with reasonable labour conditions and have them work in an acceptable environment.

I would like my colleague to tell the House if, indeed, it would be important to have all the relevant information to be able, not only to judge the value of the free trade agreement, but also to know the labour conditions of the people and the kind of protection

they will have, since there are in the three Americas some economies that are at very different stages.

**Ms. Monique Guay:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for his question. I believe that, on the issue of labour and of children working in some countries where development is in full progress and where some children are being abused, a North American agreement should not allow this.

• (1710)

I believe we can move towards a level playing field and bring fairness for all workers. Children should go to school. They should not have to provide for their family. I understand that we are not all at the same level. I understand full well that adjustments will have to be made. We are not kidding ourselves. However, we all have to go in the same direction. I believe it is the most important thing. It is the basis for creating a North American economy.

Second, I have other concerns. We already talked about water exports. I used to be critic for the environment and, as such, this issue is of great concern to me.

If the federal government were to sign some kind of agreement with the rest of North America, suddenly agreeing to exporting bulk water, how would the provinces respond? Water belongs to the provinces, it belongs to provincial governments. How will such an agreement be ratified? Will the provinces have their say in the matter?

All these factors must be taken into account. Also, we have to listen to our NGOs, our non-governmental organizations. They have to have their say in these negotiations. These negotiations are not only about economic issues. Sure it is important to trade internationally, and we cannot deny this is the way we are going.

I also sincerely believe that we are going toward a common currency. There are examples of this across the world. All we have to do is take note and look at how it is being done elsewhere and improve on it at home.

I do not believe it should happen at any cost. I believe it must be done while hanging on to our main social policies, by improving further our quality of life so that everyone in this world, our children, ourselves, and the elderly, can have a better life.

We should not let trade destroy the quality of life it took us years to achieve.

Let us reach agreements in harmony with the provinces. They should not be forgotten. They are there, they have laws and they have things to protect. Things must be done in harmony, by consensus.

### *Supply*

I am convinced that within a few years, if the federal government is open-minded enough to bring in all those who have something to say and who have a stake in all this, we might be an example for the world by reaching a North American agreement.

[English]

**Mr. John Bryden (Ancaster—Dundas—Flamborough—Aldershot, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to take part in this debate of course. I will begin by saying that I applaud the Bloc Québécois for bringing forth a motion like this in the sense that it is certainly a motion very worthy of debate. Too often opposition motions are merely designed to try to discredit the government or to gain cheap political points, but in this case this genuinely is a motion that deserves the kind of debate it has been getting today.

I have to say it is hard to mix one's own work and to try to follow a debate like this because each member who has spoken has had much to contribute and unfortunately I have not been able to follow every speech. I will say, however, that when it comes to deciding how I will vote on this issue I will, before I finally cast my ballot, look at the full *Hansard* and consider every argument that was put forward.

On the surface, however, from where I sit now, from what I have heard and from what I have read of this particular issue, I find myself half supporting the motion rather than supporting it fully. I certainly do believe that there is a great deal to be said in having a debate on this kind of subject before a treaty is finally ratified. Where I have difficulty is the part of the motion that says, and I should read the motion:

That this House demand that the government bring any draft agreement on the Free Trade Zone of the Americas before the House so that it may be debated and put to a vote before ratification—

The reality is that the government has a majority in this House and if this were put to this House after debate for ratification, what would happen is that the government would simply use its majority and it would go through.

• (1715)

In that sense it is a waste of the House's time, although I use that term very advisedly because in fact no debate in this House is a waste of the House's time.

A better way, it seems to me, to approach this is to do what happened just a few nights ago and have an emergency debate. We had, I guess, six hours of debate on the farm crisis the other night, and this was initiated in fact by the opposition I do believe. Well, both sides, actually. From the backbenches in one sense. That was an excellent debate. It touched on many, many aspects of the farm crisis and I think people watching probably gained much from it.

*Supply*

This whole question of a free trade zone for the Americas, which is coming up as a topic of conversation or a topic of negotiation, I should say, at the summit of the Americas in Quebec City in April, is an issue that has broad ramifications for the country. I would suggest that it goes even further than that. It has international ramifications and I think a debate would be very much in order.

Just to give you a little bit of history, Mr. Speaker, the summit that is coming up in April is part of a progress of summits that actually goes back to 1956. There was the first summit involving the Organization of American States. That was followed by a larger summit in 1967 which was initiated, I believe, if memory serves me right, by President Kennedy. That led to an attempt to bring Latin America under a free trade zone to the exclusion of the United States and the exclusion of Canada.

That did not work out in the long run, but the idea remained. The idea just sort of went into limbo for a long time. It was restarted by President Clinton in 1994 primarily because the world had changed dramatically. What had happened, the Soviet Union had collapsed; the east-west confrontation had ended; and the world suddenly became a patchwork of states, each trying to gain political advantage and, even more important, economic advantage.

Then, Mr. Speaker, you saw this progress starting in the very early nineties toward a World Trade Organization, toward global free trade in the broadest sense. We have gone very far in that direction, far in that direction in the sense that global free trade now involves countries that can trade with Canada, and the United States for that matter, and trade to their advantage and to our advantage.

Just in passing, I believe I am splitting my time with someone. I believe it is the secretary of state for international development. I certainly am sure that she will be listening to what I have to say and building on it when her turn comes.

Anyway, to carry on with the story, and I had better carry on fairly rapidly, the summit arises out of global free trade, the collapse of the Soviet Union and initiative by President Clinton. Initial talks were held in Miami in 1994 and one of the things that came out of those talks was the concept of a free trade zone of the Americas.

Remember, Mr. Speaker, these talks are not just about economics. I think as a result of the change in geo-politics, if you will, and geo-economics, it was recognized that it was in the Americans' interest, in the interest of the United States, to form closer alliances politically, economically and even militarily, and all of these issues are on the table when we come to a summit.

But the other aspect to the Bloc's motion that interested me was this concept of a North American free trade zone because I think something more is going on there than what has been the subject of the debates even in the newspapers.

I get the sense that what is happening here is that the Americans are perceiving a need to build a kind of firewall around the rest of the world: put this wall around North and South America in a sense to look after the possibility that someday they may have to shut out some of the rest of the world.

• (1720)

Individual colleagues made observations about human rights. I remember the member for Medicine Hat was commenting on the contradiction that we have when a country like Canada or the United States supports a third world country, only to deny access to their goods and put tariffs on their goods because of human rights problems.

We can take the example of some countries in the far east that have now just about entirely taken over the manufacture of textiles, or rugs for that matter, where these goods are manufactured in labour conditions that would be unacceptable in North America.

We face a dilemma there because if we shut off those goods, and I would suggest to you, Mr. Speaker, the shirt that I am wearing right now was probably manufactured at very, very low cost in a third world country.

It is my impression that the United States and Canada perceive that we cannot carry on global free trade indefinitely under such circumstances when we are indeed encouraging even child labour in these third world countries, which want to do it because they want to sell the product here, but we get into this terrible contradiction.

So the answer would appear to be something like a global free trade zone where standards can be set for human rights for the way labour is utilized to produce product, and at the same time preserve a market that will be sufficiently large for the United States to benefit primarily and the rest of us to benefit secondarily.

In the long term I have a great deal of sympathy for those protesters that appeared at Seattle and some of these other summits because I think we have to be very careful when we look at global free trade, or even the free trade of the Americas, that what we may be doing is creating dependencies that may put off a crisis among human beings, a crisis in terms of being able to produce product and feed ourselves that we may have to face in the years to come.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I want to ask my hon. friend from the other side a simple question that relates to a comment made by the parliamentary secretary to the solicitor general. He said that the government had done everything in its power to pursue free trade.

I suggest that is fantasy and not fact. The government has pursued free trade on the one hand but has tied the hands of our exporters and companies by keeping very high taxes. That creates an uneven playing field for exporters. It has also imposed, and

continues to fail to act to remove, the interprovincial barriers to trade that compromise our exporters and companies from competing on a level playing field.

My question is simply this. Will the member ask his ministers to pursue, with the same zeal that they do internationally, the removal of interprovincial barriers to trade and the reduction of taxes in the country that choke off the ability of our private sector to compete?

**Mr. John Bryden:** Mr. Speaker, well oddly enough sometimes it is harder for the federal government to negotiate with the provinces than it is with other states.

Of course we want to get as free an exchange of skills and products as we can in this country. However, it is a two way street on that. Sometimes it is very difficult to get the agreements that we would like from the provinces. I suggest that the province of Quebec is a perfect example, when there were barriers to the free exchange of skilled labour and jobs and employment across the border that is merely the Ottawa River.

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to remind my colleague of the approach suggested by the hon. member for Laurentides. We are not asking for sanctions or standards. We want these agreements to uphold fundamental rights while respecting the culture and the heritage of each of the nations concerned. We favour a collaborative approach.

• (1725)

For instance, although child labour is unacceptable, it cannot be eliminated overnight. As one of the wealthier countries in the world, we have a duty to help the poorer countries to solve their problems within a deadline. What we need to do so is a strong political will that the government seems unable to express except in its empty rhetoric.

It looks like the government is ignoring what everyone in Canada, in Quebec and in most parts of the western world is decrying. There are some democratic shortcomings to this free trade area of the Americas proposal but also to globalization.

There is more and more talk of executive democracy. It will no longer be parliaments that make decisions but executives. What is being proposed to us with rejection of the Bloc Québécois motion is to sanction or institutionalize the fact that democracy is now being exercised through the executives around the PMO, with parliament no longer having a role to play. I do not accept that view.

I think that by rejecting the motion, the government is going to send the signal that our concerns, needs and demands are no longer to be channelled through parliamentarians, and that we now have to find the means of being heard out in the street. This is irresponsible, in my opinion. Thus, passing our motion is a gesture of

### Supply

responsibility, one that adds value to the role of parliamentarians and one that I would call the democratic way of resolving problems.

Does the hon. member admit that democracy is getting short shrift in the creation of the free trade area of the Americas?

[English]

**Mr. John Bryden:** Mr. Speaker, I must say that if that was a question or comment I look forward with eager anticipation for the speech that is to come.

I do not think the member opposite listened to me very carefully because I did assure him that the whole question of child labour is something that should be debated, and that there should be a debate in the House on the question of a free trade zone. There is no doubt in my mind.

But the member has simply ignored the fact that if we put it to a vote, the government would simply pass it because it would use its majority. We can have the debate and we should have the debate, but it does not have to be through legislation. It can be done through a simple resolution of the House.

Mr. Speaker, if the member's questions are that long, we could have a 12 hour or a 15 hour debate in which he could speak for 40 minutes and he could get all these things onto the record.

**Hon. Maria Minna (Minister for International Cooperation, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, these trade talks open a political space. They deal with a host of issues we need to pay attention to. One is the economic issue, but we also are discussing social issues plus governance and human rights. These are very important things that must be discussed at the same time.

Canada is therefore working to place development at the centre of the Quebec City summit declaration. Canada's goal is an agenda that balances economic and social issues. Social and economic issues are one and the same. They go together. That helps poor countries in Latin America harness and manage globalization to reduce their poverty.

Healthy people make globalization work for them. Educated people make globalization work for them. Effective governments that respect human rights make globalization work for their citizens as well.

Efficient markets create prosperity, but we must remember that prosperity must be shared and equitable. It must be shared by all sectors of society, otherwise it is not efficient or good for prosperity and the markets will not work efficiently for everyone.

It is important to remember when we talk about trade that at the summit the Government of Canada will also be talking about democracy, good governance, human rights, social issues and an equitable sharing of prosperity. Those are very important issues.



*Supply*

They are issues Canada has put on the table, and they will be the themes discussed at the summit of the Americas, which we are proud to host.

The Government of Canada, through my department, is committed to working with Central and South America. Our goal is a prosperous, stable hemisphere characterized by healthy and educated citizens: in sum, Mr. Speaker, a better world for all of the Americas, north and south.

• (1730)

We want to ensure that our whole hemisphere, which is one of the hemispheres with the biggest disparity between rich and poor, is in fact assisted.

There is no question that trade is important and that is one of the themes. However, Canada has been extremely strong at the summits to make sure that we include social issues, human rights, governance and democracy as part of the themes.

That is what I did when I travelled in the Americas. That was my discussion with my counterparts and ministers of other governments to ensure that these themes are strong and that they are an integral part of the discussion at the summit of the Americas. The outcome is people based and focuses on the benefit of human development.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the minister and her plan for development of the Latin American part of the summit of the free trade zone.

I do not think we have any problems with what she said. We understand the goals she is talking about. We understand Canada extending a helping hand for good governance, for democracy and for all those issues that will have a major impact on Latin America and which will help it come into free trade with America. We must see that they are also prosperous. We cannot live alone on an island of prosperity. We agree with that.

The question is why can parliamentarians not debate and ratify international agreements that the government signs. The FTAA is one of the examples which can be done over here. Our main point is that we want the ability, as elected representatives, to have those agreements come here so we can discuss them. We may be sharing the same goals which she outlined. However, at least parliamentarians and everybody would have an open forum, not just this website that they keep talking about. Her comments on that one would be appreciated.

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Mr. Speaker, as the Minister for International Trade has said many times, Canada's position is public. I know my colleague has asked the other participants to agree to make their positions public as well in order that not only all Canadians but the members of all of those countries can participate in the discussion.

The issue is broad and must be discussed by society at large. Our position has been made public and the minister has made that clear. Certainly our colleagues in parliament can discuss Canada's position. We are discussing it with NGOs, civil society and with any Canadian citizen who wants to participate. It is not a secret. It is not being kept in abeyance.

The minister has made Canada's position public and in fact has asked other countries to also agree to make their positions public. Nothing is being hidden.

We should be proud of the fact that not only is Canada hosting the summit of the Americas, which is a north-south dialogue, but at the same time we are leading the way and insisting on putting on the agenda issues which are fundamental to the equilibrium and balance of our hemisphere with respect to social infrastructure, democracy and human rights and to make sure that we have a stable hemisphere, in terms of economic, social and democratic issues. There is no hidden agenda.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Marcel Gagnon (Champlain, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, we hear some rather surprising things here. This is a democratic parliament, and the minister has just told us that everything is public and we can discuss it here, no problem. We are also told to go and look on the Internet for our answers. Why are we elected and who do we represent, we might ask.

• (1735)

The previous speaker said "There is no point having a debate here, because we form a majority, in any case, and it will pass". I would like you or someone to enlighten me. They say democracy wears out if it is not used. If we lose it one day, we will be sorry.

We still live in a democratic country, I hope. We call for a debate on a fundamental project that will affect the future, one my grandchildren will live with. We ask to debate it. We are not being arrogant. We are saying "It should be debated". We get "We do not have the time" on one side. And we get "We form a majority, so it will pass anyway" on another. The minister says "Everything is open, we can debate it".

How should we proceed in order to get satisfaction, I ask her?

[*English*]

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Mr. Speaker, obviously there is a debate today but there are also the standing committees. It does not minimize the members. There is a set membership of the committees but members of the House are ex-officio and can participate at committee. They can also make a representation as a witnesses, if they wish. The committee process is open.

There will be debates and discussions at the committee level. That is where intensive discussion does take place. That is part of the parliamentary system. There is nothing hidden here at all and

that is why they are elected. The fact is members may wish to appear as witnesses and I am sure all members will want to do that.

**Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I have two questions for the minister. First, 400,000 Canadians every year travel to Cuba, yet Cuba has not been invited to the summit of the Americas. In the post-Castro era which will come in the not too distant future, the exclusion of Cuba from a free trade agreement with the Americas will only contribute to the continued poverty that exists in that country. Why has Cuba been excluded from the summit in Canada?

Second, will the minister present to her counterparts in cabinet that all free trade agreements and international treaties be put in front of the relevant standing committee before they are ratified by the government?

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Mr. Speaker, as I said, Canada's position in the free trade discussions has been made public. The committee will have hearings. The committee will be discussing Canada's position. All members of the House are free to participate, both as witnesses or as participants around the table to intervene and ask questions of the witnesses. This is the parliamentary system. We have a committee process especially for that reason, so we can get into issues in a more in-depth sort of way.

I said that the Minister for International Trade has made Canada's position public, which is why it is being discussed widely, not only in the standing committee and in the House, but also across the country. At the same time he has asked his counterparts to agree to make all of their positions public as well. That has not happened yet and may not happen. However, with respect that is not something we have control over.

It is important that we as Canadians ensure that we protect the kinds of issues that we care about. This is why it is happening at committee, in the House and in the public forum as well.

[Translation]

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold (Jonquière, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I ask the minister a question.

Madame Minister, I do not understand what you just said. I listened to the interpretation, I listened to what you said in English, but I think that what you are telling us now is that there will be committees.

On the one hand, the government says "No, we cannot say what our positions are because that is a secret and must remain so, because our partners do not want us to put that on the table". On the other hand, you tell us to look on the site—

**The Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I simply wish to remind the House that members must always address their remarks to the Chair.

*Supply*

• (1740)

**Ms. Jocelyne Girard-Bujold:** I apologize, Mr. Speaker. Through you, I would like to put a question to the minister.

She continually contradicted herself in everything she said in response to both speakers. I believe she is not aware of what is happening currently with respect to the negotiations.

Government members keep on referring to the Internet site, but we know what is on an Internet site. All of a sudden, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade tells us we cannot talk about this because our partners do not want us to talk about it. Then the other one tells us parliamentary committees will review it.

We were elected. We represent the people and we want to be part of something that will have an impact on the life and the future of our children and grandchildren.

I ask the minister how we, who are parliamentarians just as she is, should go about it? She was democratically elected, just as we were, so that our voices and those of the people we represent could be heard.

[English]

**Hon. Maria Minna:** Mr. Speaker, even before the last election the committee met and discussed publicly Canada's position. It is being discussed publicly across the line. Anyone who wishes to participate can. The information is there.

More important, parliamentarians from the hemisphere will be in this very room the week in March when the House is not sitting to debate exactly that. What better opportunity to discuss not only among ourselves, but with other parliamentarians in the hemisphere, the issue that we are debating today. It seems to me there is a great deal of opportunity to get into the details and to share the issues.

**Mr. Rick Casson (Lethbridge, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I will be splitting my time with my colleague for Calgary East.

Before I start on the topic today, I would like to thank the people who put on the flag ceremony in Lethbridge today at the legion. I was supposed to be there but I was unable to attend. I want to acknowledge the fact that they did that. They do it every year and I really appreciate them that.

Also, the other day some of the members in the House had the opportunity to be briefed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade. I want to thank the parliamentary secretary, the member for London—Fanshawe and the staff for the tremendous job they did. We have already used some of the things we learned and we will certainly take up their offer to come back anytime.

*Supply*

We are talking about the Bloc motion today to have the House, this elected body, ratify agreements, particularly dealing with the FTAA conference which is coming up in March. That is something we support.

We feel that these agreements should come here to be ratified. It is done elsewhere in the world. I cannot quite understand the government's hesitancy to not do that. Certainly there is a lot of information available. We know that. However, when going into negotiations on an agreement, not only should our position be known, but what we agree to in those negotiations should be available for Canadians to peruse before it is put into effect. Therefore, we will be supporting the motion that the Bloc has put forward.

Since 1994, the government has signed 470 different treaties and ratified 295 of them. This is something that goes on at a pretty aggressive rate. All kinds of treaties are signed to deal with all aspects of our lives and our society. It is important that we be aware of what the government is working on, what it is dealing in and the positions that it is taking when it goes through these negotiations.

Right now it only needs the approval and the construction by bureaucrats and the approval of cabinet. We feel Canadians should have a last look at what has been agreed to and what the final position is because what we go in with is not always what we come back out with.

There have been instances in the past where I would have liked to have known what went on at the WTO meetings and the GATT meetings on agriculture. I would liked to have known who was traded off against whom and what the position of the government was going into the meeting as to who was dispensable and who was not.

The sugar beet growers in my area are the only group of producers in Canada left that grow sugar in Canada and their future looks a little dim. There has been a concern for years about some of the things that happened at some of those negotiations and how they might have been traded off against other sectors of the industry.

This leaves a little bit too much power, we feel, in the hands of a few and takes it away from the people of Canada through the representation that they have given us in this House.

• (1745)

The NGOs, witnesses and people who the government brings together to put these positions and to do the negotiating are certainly experts in their field. We do not disagree with that. It brings together the people who have the knowledge in their respective areas.

That being said, who selects them? Is there a public process to make sure that the people who are selected are the people we want

representing us as a country? It is important to bring back to the House what has been negotiated.

Any trade has to be rules based and fair. We feel that in the agricultural community this has not always been the case. The situation in which we find the grain and oilseed primary producers in agriculture is deplorable. It has to do with unfair subsidies in both the United States and the European Union.

We used to have some support for our farmers, such as the Crow rate and others. When the deal was struck that we would get rid of this subsidy and these supports, as the other countries did, Canada went ahead and cut the support to our primary producers putting them in the situation they are in now. We did that but the other countries did not follow suit. In some cases, particularly in Europe, there have been instances where they have increased the support while we have decreased it.

We put our primary producers in a spot that is almost unbearable. Farms are going under on a daily basis. It is due to the agreement that was struck and what the government did to a particular sector. Those types of agreements could have been brought back here. I am sure the agreement that the government took into those negotiations was not the one it came out with. What it agreed to should have come to the House for all of us to look at, and certainly for the people who it was going to affect, which were the primary producers.

The government indicated that it was something it could not do. It could not bring an agreement back to the House. However, it is done in the United States. Treaties have to be ratified by a two-thirds majority of the elected upper house. That is fair. It gives everybody another chance to look at what is going on. It gives the Americans who are affected a chance for more input. That is what we would like as a country and for the citizens in Canada.

I was given some information concerning France. It states: "Peace treaties, trade treaties, treaties of agreements concerning an international organization, those involving state finances, those amending rules of a legislative nature, those concerning individual states and those calling for the transfer, exchange or annexation of territory, may be ratified or approved only by an act of parliament".

It is being done elsewhere so to say that it cannot be done here does not quite cut it. We have some suggestions that we would like to offer the government on ways it could improve the process. Consultation in this elected Chamber would be one way to do that.

One of the first things I mentioned was parliamentary ratification. It is a simple process. It should be brought to the House after it has been negotiated. We could then look at it and either agree with it or offer some changes or amendments to make it better.

We also suggest a requirement for an assessment. This is what we have agreed to do on these trade issues but let us look at the impact that that will have on Canadians in general. Let us look at the impact it will have on industry. Let us look at what it will do to

families. Let us look at what it will do to services. Let us look at how it will affect other parts. Have we asked the provinces how it will affect their situations? Including the provinces would strengthen the whole idea of federalism. We have talked about the alienation of parts of Canada. This would give the provinces and different regions a feeling that they are a bigger part of some of the decision making.

We should ensure that the people who put us in this elected Chamber are aware of what is going and that they have an opportunity to look at what these treaties will do and how they will affect their lives.

• (1750)

The last aspect is that it would increase the accountability of government. Knowing that anything that is agreed to would have to come back to the House to be ratified, it would put a new focus on what is being agreed to and what is being done. It would give a bit more accountability to the whole process. It would add some credibility to what has been negotiated. It would add some confidence to what is being done. It would allow Canadians one last chance to look at something that could affect their lives.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to congratulate my colleague on his appointment as trade critic. In reference to the briefing the other day, I appreciate those remarks and I look forward to working with him and the other critics in the spirit of co-operation to advance the agenda of trade.

My colleague cited the United States and France and how things were done differently in those two countries. I remind him that both of those countries are republics and that Canada is not. We have a parliamentary system. The government negotiates trade agreements to promote Canadian trade interests. It signs those agreements only when it is convinced that those agreements are in the best interest of the country. Parliament is then asked to review the agreement and debate the implementing legislation. Amendments are possible at that time.

I have a question for the member. Does he not see the Bloc motion for what it is? It is a radical departure from a process that has been followed by governments of different political stripes in every trade agreement we have had, a process that has served the country very well. It is more of a radical departure than perhaps how my colleague sees it. What would be his reaction to that?

**Mr. Rick Casson:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for the question. He says that the government only agrees to agreements that are good for the country. I remind the parliamentary secretary about the Kyoto agreement.

### *Supply*

We went through that scenario in the House a couple of years ago. We asked the government day after day through question period what its stance would be when it got to Japan, what it would have on the table and how it would affect Canadians. We asked that question almost everyday for months and we never did get an answer.

When the government went to the meeting to establish guidelines that would affect absolutely all Canadians and how they lived their lives and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by the amount agreed to, it did not know the position of Canadians. It agreed while it was there and came back with the agreement. It told Canadians what it had agreed to. It did not have any idea how it would get there, but it was to start a process of consultation with the round tables to decide how it would be done.

I disagree with the parliamentary secretary when he says that the government only agrees to things that will benefit Canada, when it goes to a negotiation and does not know what its position is and does not have the degree of effort it will take from Canadians to reach those goals. I use that as one instance.

Another example is something that we have been working on in western Canada for a year and a half. Our cattle producers were challenged by a group in the United States called R-Calf. Our live cattle going south across the border were being unfairly subsidized. There was a long process. A tariff was placed against our cattle. Bonds had to be placed at the border and a tariff had to be paid on every head of cattle that went across the line.

The whole process ended up costing the industry \$5 million. In the end it was found that we were not subsidizing our cattle. The tariff was taken off and the money was refunded.

• (1755)

These agitations go on. North Dakotans are constantly challenging and looking at the wheat board. There are agitations and irritants within the agreements that we presently have. There is a process in place that we can go through, as countries, for grievances and challenges to get them worked out.

Some of the agreements that have been struck have really hurt different sectors of our country, such as the grain and oilseed sector which had its support reduced here when it was not backed up by the same kind of reduced support elsewhere. I do not know if what we have done is repairable. It will take a lot of effort. We keep asking the government when that help and those funds will come through but we have heard nothing yet.

When we talk about the process, I believe I just gave a couple of instances where the process did not worked. If the government had agreed to an agreement and had brought it back to the House to be fully debated, perhaps some amendments and changes could have been put forward that would have helped.



*Supply*

[Translation]

**Mr. Pierre Paquette (Joliette, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, does the member not find something slightly paradoxical in the fact that one of the three themes for the upcoming summit of the Americas is the strengthening of democracy, when the government refuses to bet on democracy with regard to the free trade area of the Americas negotiations?

[English]

**Mr. Rick Casson:** Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of that detail but parliamentary reform is something that we have talked an awful lot about since the last election. We are also trying to get more democracy in the House and in our committees.

The parliamentary secretary mentioned that the United States and France are republics but democratically elected people should be responsible to the people who elect them. I believe a process of consultation and open review is the way we should be doing it.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai (Calgary East, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of the constituents of Calgary East to speak on today's motion, which would require the government to subject any project or accord on a free trade agreement with the Americas to a debate and vote before it is ratified by the government. It is a very simple question and a very simple motion.

I have been listening to the government's position all day and what I have heard is an attempt by the government to bring in the ministers and other players to tell us what is happening with free trade in the Americas and how good free trade will be in the Americas. It has been attempting to point out the issues that it is trying to bring to the table of free trade with the Americas.

It is quite interesting that the government is telling us all these things now that the Bloc has brought forward this motion. If the Bloc had not brought forward the motion, in all probability we would not have known all these details that are now coming out point by point.

The government has said, and the minister and the parliamentary secretary have kept repeating it, that it has a website, that it is an open consultation process and that everyone is invited to come to the committees and talk. That is not the question. It is a matter of principle.

I agree that in the last parliament the foreign affairs committee did a study on FTAA. I was part of that committee and we listened. However, I have to say that the study was done prior to going into consultation. I thought it was a good idea. We, the official opposition, put in a minority report on that study.

The minority report that we submitted asked exactly for the same thing that is being asked for by the Bloc. We recommended that

treaties be brought into parliament to be ratified by elected officials. If the government looks up the Canadian Alliance's minority report it will see that is exactly what we were recommending.

The government could go ahead and do the consultation. When negotiations are done and a final draft is available, the draft should be brought to the elected officials who could discuss the issues in committee.

In all probability, most of us, who believe in free trade, in human rights and in democracy, would probably agree with the government's position.

● (1800)

However, there could be some areas in which it needs attention. We could hear from our own constituents, but where and how will our constituents talk? They can only talk through elected representatives. That is what we have been telling them. We have been telling them for years and years that we are their elected representatives, that we are their voice in Ottawa, their voice in government affairs.

Now what is happening? The minister and everyone said that we go through the committees. We have sat in committees. This is my second term. I have sat in committees and committees are not the voice of debate. Committees will hear witnesses, but they are not a point of debate. Debate should be done by members of parliament in the House.

Let me give an example: NAFTA. The NAFTA agreement was done by the bureaucrats, by the mandarins behind the scenes, was brought in and of course it was signed. One area that turned out to be of concern after NAFTA was signed was the issue of bulk water exports. That became an issue when Canadians got concerned about the bulk water export issue.

The Liberal Party said in one of its red book promises that it would open up the negotiations on NAFTA so it could exclude water. Of course NAFTA had already been signed and of course could not be opened up. The Liberals have not opened it up so far, and so far we still have this problem of water. That is why the government has been running to the provincial governments asking them not to give licences for the sale of water. The government knows what will happen under NAFTA.

As a matter of principle it is necessary to bring treaties that affect the lives of Canadians into the Chamber that is supposed to be their voice. We cannot exclude that. This business of saying that there are committees and websites and all these things is all a minor attempt to open up things. At the end of the day, it is important for elected officials, not only for NGOs. NGOs are accountable to nobody. They have their own agendas, and sure,

they will write their own agendas. It is the elected officials who are responsible to their constituents, and constituents should be having their voices heard over there, not just a couple of those other things.

I have a good example. When my colleague was talking about France and the U.S.A., the parliamentary secretary said that model should not apply to Canada because the U.S.A. and France are republics. I want to tell him that in Australia, which is a federation like Canada, the Australian parliament changed its system to ensure that treaties over there would be debated. Treaties would come into parliament and would have the approval of provincial legislatures before they would come into effect.

What I have found out is that the federal government signs all these international treaties that fall under the jurisdiction of the provinces and then forces the provinces to do something in which they are not interested. The Kyoto protocol is an example.

At the end of the day the Australians said that was not the way a pure democracy should be working, so they changed it and now their parliament and their provinces have input into international treaties before they are ratified.

What is the problem in Canada? We have heard from the parliamentary secretary, who said that this is how we have been doing business in the past year, that this is how we have been signing treaties and so on. Fine. That is how they have been doing it in the past. Now Canadians are demanding accountability. Canadians are asking for change. They are asking that their voices be heard.

The parliamentary reform that everybody is talking about is another example of where Canadians want change, so I do not understand why the government is afraid to bring it forward for debate. Why do they not want to change so that Canadians' elected representatives can talk about it?

If the treaty is good, which I think it will be at the end of the day, nobody will oppose it. We may have somebody opposing it, but if it is good for the country, why should we oppose it? We believe in free trade.

● (1805)

At the end of the day my appeal to the government is this. Yes, we do have certain systems like committees and all these things, but they are not sufficient to bring transparency to international agreements. The FTAA agreement in the motion is just one example. As a principle, treaties and agreements should be coming in front of parliament to be ratified by elected officials.

**Mr. Larry Bagnell (Yukon, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I cannot remain here and not comment on three items that came up this afternoon.

### *Supply*

First, the Canadian Alliance Party talked once again about reforms of agricultural subsidies. This is so inconsistent with its general platform. The Alliance went through the election talking about the elimination of subsidies, especially regional development subsidies that would help my constituency. I wish Alliance members would be consistent. If they are going to push for one type of subsidy, I ask them to not eliminate the ones that will help my riding.

Second, I would like to commend the Alliance member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca for talking about the benefits to the poor of free trade, in response to a Bloc intervention. That allows us to remind people that free trade agreements often allow for the reduction of tariffs and, therefore, lower priced products for poor people in many nations. That will help the poor. It has a second effect on the poor, of course, in that the less developed nations can then export their products with more ease and have more jobs for their people, who may not have an income otherwise.

However, the third and last point I want to make is in regard to another intervention by the member for Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca. He said that the government was putting the exporters at a terrible disadvantage and suggested a whole major revamping of the tax system, which was really not appropriate here. I will tell you, however, that is not what would put our exporters at a disadvantage. What would put our exporters at a disadvantage is following the advice of the Leader of the Opposition who, in his response to the throne speech, talked of eliminating the export programs that have made Canada second to none in this world at export efficiency.

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the member for bringing forward his three points. The first point was on subsidies. We know what a distortion of the market has taken place in the agricultural sector because of subsidies by the European Union as well as the U.S.A. They have created an unlevel playing field, which is why we need to discuss this with them. At the end of the day, the Canadian Alliance feels it is not the responsible use of tax dollars. We would like to see that going away, but we would like to see it taking place in negotiations to get rid of the subsidies so that there is a level playing field.

We believe in the rules based system of trade, which is the government's position. I agree with that. We have said we agree with the rules based system. A rules based system will help Canada.

The hon. member mentioned the tax issues my colleague talked about. That is about competitiveness. If the member would read what the business leaders in Canada are saying, he would see they are saying that high taxes are a disadvantage to competitiveness for Canada, a disadvantage to taking advantage of globalization or of all the free trade of the Americas. That is absolutely not a contradiction. That is coming out loud and clear. All the member has to do is listen to the business people. The Canadian Alliance policy on that is quite distinct.

*Supply*

The hon. member said the Leader of the Opposition was talking about export subsidies. Export subsidies distort the market. That is why we have the ongoing war with Brazil.

• (1810)

We talk about a rules based system, and all of a sudden that is thrown away by Captain Canada when he comes along and gives a subsidy to Bombardier, a company that is doing extremely well. It is consistent with what I have heard. The government has been talking about a rules based system. It is quite surprising what the industry minister said, which is not what I have been hearing for many years from the government.

**Mr. Ken Epp (Elk Island, Canadian Alliance):** Mr. Speaker, I enjoyed the speech my colleague just gave. I have a fairly straightforward question. Sometimes in negotiations it is good to be able to go in without having laid all the cards on the table. Therefore for us to debate and come to a conclusion on our opening position in some of these negotiations could put Canada at a disadvantage.

Does the member see the necessity of parliament debating in broad generalities the position going in or actually getting specific? Does he advocate that parliament should ratify the final agreement after it has been negotiated by the various officials who do the negotiations?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my colleague for asking that question. That is the essence of the whole thing.

The committee heard representations and had consultations on what would be our position going into this agreement, which is fine. That is the way it should be. We should open it up to Canadians before talking about it at committee level. We should take the views of Canadians and use them as a position, not leave it to the bureaucrats or mandarins of the department. After having done that, what would be the final outcome? We do not know.

The draft agreement is not the final outcome. That has not been signed. That is what we are talking about today and that is what my colleague is worried about. It is the final version that requires approval by parliament before the Government of Canada signs it.

**Mr. Pat O'Brien (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, does my colleague not understand that what he is calling for is unprecedented in Canada? That practice that has never been followed with any major trade agreement in the past.

Does he not understand that there will be full opportunity to debate and review the agreement in the House of Commons? We are open to constructive criticisms on the deal, and amendments would be possible. Does he not understand that?

**Mr. Deepak Obhrai:** Mr. Speaker, if my friend on the other side had heard my speech, that is exactly what I said. We can change.

What happened in the past? We know from the MAI agreement and other agreements on globalization that if we do not discuss and have a transparent system then we have trouble. Let us change the system. We do not want to sit with the old system. It is time to move into the 21st century.

[*Translation*]

**The Deputy Speaker:** It being 6.15 p.m., pursuant to order made earlier today, all questions necessary to dispose of the Business of Supply are deemed put, a recorded division is deemed requested and deferred to the end of the period provided for Government Orders on Tuesday, February 20, 2001.

[*English*]

It being 6.15 p.m. the House stands adjourned until tomorrow at 10 a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24.

(The House adjourned at 6.15 p.m.)







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