

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

Minister (Mr. Mulroney) when he appointed the Hon. Member for Vancouver Centre (Miss Carney). He said: "I am going to give the Minister the ball and watch her go". We saw where she went. She went over her own goal line and scored a touchdown in her own end zone when she negotiated the softwood lumber agreement that cost the Canadian industry \$100 million.

Of course we have the wonderful example of the present Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) who has given new dimension to the meaning of illiteracy. He had the gall to stand up and say with respect to the most important decision facing Canadians in decades that he had not bothered to read the basic document yet. He was going to rely upon his officials to tell him what was in it. I am sure his officials are trustworthy. But I would say that an abdication of responsibility such as the Minister confessed to is one that is singular in the historical annals of the country.

In saying that I want to say that I have had some interesting companions along the way. I pay tribute to my friend, the Hon. Member for Essex—Windsor (Mr. Langdon), who in all my travels has been to every committee, travelled with every task force and been involved in every debate along with me.

I also want to pay some compliment to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister for International Trade (Mr. McDermid) who is not in the House at the moment. I would say that while I totally disagree with everything that he has had to say, and while we have fought hard and in some cases in a tough way, I have also respected the way in which he has conducted himself in this House. I appreciate the fact that over the past two or three years in trying to organize this very important exercise in the House of Commons we have been able to retain a level of respect for one another. I certainly do for him.

I appreciate those kinds of options. I believe that this is a debate that should not be conducted in a fit of vindictiveness, a spirit of meanness. Unfortunately, those are the qualities that the present Minister for International Trade brought to the debate. It should be conducted on the basis of hard, serious exchange of two very different points of view, two very different versions of what the country is about, two very different visions of what is Canada.

If I have any assessment, any feeling after three years of being involved in this matter, it is how much it has divided the country. There was with some great irony last night as I watched the Prime Minister in his 20 minutes of free paid political advertising offered by the CBC. He was asked this question: "What would you consider to be your greatest accomplishment?" He said: "National unity". Immediately my mind flashed back to the intense, sometimes bitter conflict between business and labour, between region and region, between one group and another, between church groups and the chambers of commerce and the way that this debate has divided the country like no other issue ever has. It has been far more intense than have been issues of language, issues of

regional division. It has gone to our very heart and soul. The country is split right down the middle. For the Prime minister to say that his greatest accomplishment was national unity makes me wonder what planet he came from. What spaceship has he been on if he does not recognize that out there in the country there is an internal roiling of feeling, of emotion and of conflict?

I looked back at a novel written by Benjamin Disraeli entitled *Sybil* in which he described England in the 19th century. I thought it was reminiscent of Canada in 1988. He wrote:

"Two nations, between them there is no intercourse, no sympathy, who are as ignorant of each other's habits, thoughts and feelings as if they were dwellers on different planets in different zones, who are formed by different breeding, are fed by different foods, are ordered by different manners, are not governed by the same laws."

When asked of whom he spoke, he said the rich and the poor. It is close to that in Canada now. I am not sure the divisions are totally between rich and poor. Let us look at the differences and the divisions in terms of groups that have appeared before the committee to express their views on the trade agreement.

In favour of the free trade agreement were the Business Council on National Issues, the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the Canadian Bankers Association, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business, the Petroleum Association of Canada, the Canadian Pulp and Paper Association and the Canadian Life and Health Insurance Association. On the other side of the debate is the Canadian Labour Congress, the Québec Federation of Labour, Canadian Federation of National Trade Unions, the Québec Teachers Federation, the Canadian Teachers Federation, the United Church of Canada, the Ontario Federation of Agriculture, National Action Committee on the Status of Women, Women Working With Immigrant Women, and the National Anti-poverty Organization. There is the division of our country in front of us. That is what this Government has created.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Mr. Axworthy:** Members opposite wish to make light of this. The fact of the matter is, as they well know, we have two solitudes. We have these two worlds. The Government has rammed right down the middle and split them apart. We saw it this morning with the Minister for International Trade. There was no sense of understanding or comprehension of the other side. No. He just put his steel jackboots on and tramped over everybody who disagreed with him.

**Mr. Robichaud:** Rambo-style.

**Mr. Axworthy:** That is right. Rambo-style. Put an Uzi submachine gun in the hands of the Minister for International Trade and let him spew all over the country. He does not care who he hits. He just wants to let us have it. That may be okay if one is an adolescent going to a Saturday afternoon movie.