

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The debate on Free Trade has raised strong emotions. Things may be said in the heat of the moment that exaggerate or innocently mis-state. I am afraid that I cannot credit either of these excuses to what Mr. Turner and Mr. Broadbent said in the television debates. They had prepared their lines and they have repeated their statements since. What they said was deliberate and it was wrong.

I want to speak to you today about the most outrageous thing that they said...that senior citizens will have to fear for their Old Age Pensions because of Free Trade...that those who are sick will have to fear for their medical care because of Free Trade...that those who are unemployed will have to fear for the benefits they have earned because of Free Trade. In fact, that all Canadians will have to fear that our whole system of social programs will be swept away because of Free Trade.

Mr. Turner said,

"[The Liberals] will never sign a deal which surrenders our control and our ability to manage ...our social programs...Mr. Mulroney's trade deal does just that."

And, Mr. Broadbent said,

"[The Free Trade Agreement] threatens our families ...our medicare and pensions."

The Prime Minister challenged Mr. Broadbent to point to the specific provision of the Agreement that affects social programs. Mr. Broadbent could not. The reason is simple.

Social programs are not covered by the Free Trade Agreement. The only services covered by the Agreement are those listed in Annex 1408. Government-provided services are not listed. They are outside the Agreement. That's only sensible. The Agreement is about the rules of international trade, not domestic social policy.