

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

come here before me? They came here for the opportunity to produce. We have been very good at producing. We have been very successful in making this land productive. That is obvious when we see that we have to export as much as we do. If we were not producing it we would not be able to export it. Why are we able to export it? It is because the product we produce is in demand. It is a high quality product. Whether it is grain and oilseeds, or whether it is in the livestock sector, people buy it because it is a good buy. We are reliable sellers. We produce a high quality product. Our reputation internationally is such that Canada as a country is respected. That also helps us when it comes to sales.

When we see what has been happening, we see that we have been so good at what we have been doing that trade barriers have been erected against us. If we look at what has been happening recently internationally, we see the type of subsidies that have been put up against us in order for other countries to get at our markets. We find that in the European Community producers are being paid three and four times as much for barley as is a Canadian farmer. They are being paid three, four, and more times for the production of Durum wheat in Europe. Yet, on the Canadian Prairies, we probably produce the best quality Durum or pasta wheat in the world. Artificial barriers are put up. Non-tariff barriers are put up.

Why? It is not because we are a great big country and can afford to subsidize like the Europeans or the Americans. It is simply because we are very good at what we do and we produce a very high quality product.

This agreement gives us the opportunity to compete with that high quality product on a fair basis. That is really what this agreement is all about. It is nothing magical. The Prime Minister said again that it is not a perfect deal. We all know that. We say that continually. However, it is so far down the road in the right direction compared to where we are now in trade and agriculture that it is obvious, at least in my mind, and in the minds of many Canadians, the right way to go.

Many Canadians support this agreement. There is a group that has been put together called the Canadian Policy Alliance. It very strongly supports this agreement. I would like to mention who makes up this group. They are the Alberta Pork Producers Marketing Board, the Canadian Cattlemen's Association, the Manitoba Hog Producers Marketing Board, the Ontario Pork Producers Marketing Board, the Saskatchewan Pork Producers Marketing Board, the United Grain Growers, a very large grain handling co-operative on the Prairies, the Western Barley Growers, and the Western Canadian Wheat Growers.

This is what they have said about the free trade agreement: "There is no doubt freer access to the U.S. market will be beneficial to the large majority of Canadian farmers. With the decline of traditional markets for grains and oilseeds the very survival of large sectors of Canadian agriculture could well depend on secure access to the large and prosperous North American market".

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Why will that happen? I want to suggest that it will happen for three reasons. First, the agreement establishes a fair set of rules. We know that those rules are ahead of time. Through negotiation they have been arrived at on a fair basis, and essentially they are fair rules. Second, both tariff and non-tariff barriers will be removed over the first 10 years of this agreement. Third, when disputes and concerns arise there are provisions in the agreement for a dispute settling mechanism.

It is very important to have rules of conduct in almost any endeavour in life, especially in a competitive sense. That is what we are talking about in trade. It is a competition.

Today the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) referred to Wayne Gretzky. I wish to refer to him in a little different light. Mr. Gretzky is perhaps one of the best hockey players ever to lace on a pair of skates. In many ways he is not exceptional as far as physical ability is concerned. He does not compare to Gordie Howe or Bobby Hull when it comes to stature and the ability to handle body-checks. However, he is very good at what he does. What would happen to Mr. Gretzky if every time he went on to the rink he played in a game that did not have very many rules and the other players were a lot larger than he was, and big enough that they could make up some of the rules as they went along? It would be very difficult for Mr. Gretzky to show how good he is every time he plays, and we all know that he does that.

In many ways that is the same situation with respect to Canadian agriculture. A country of 25 million people is able to produce beyond what we need in our own country and able to produce a high quality product. In the past we have demonstrated that we are so good that other countries want to erect barriers or trade in unfair ways to prevent us from getting into their markets. That is what the free trade agreement is all about. It is about establishing fair rules as far as trade between our two countries is concerned, and specifically here I am talking about agriculture.

Let us look at some of the non-tariff barriers. There are many ways to thwart, limit, and frustrate trade. All that has to be done is inspect something at the U.S. border, it goes into the United States, and the Americans say that it did not meet a certain inspection, and send it back. If it is a perishable good, in the process of sending it back the shipper is so frustrated with what has been going on that he does not ship any more. We all know that that happens.

One of the most important things that we can do in this country to facilitate trade with the United States is to sit down with the Americans and work out a standard set of regulations that will be accepted on both sides of the border. Once those standard regulations are worked out, we then inspect on a random basis, or on whatever basis we determine, to see that those regulations and specifications are met. Surely that makes sense.