

strictly economic consequences of the Free Trade Agreement between the United States and our country. Canadians of all regions, of all opinions as well as of all origins seem to have understood better than most of our experts the democratic qualities inherent in this agreement. Of all our spiritual, intellectual and national resources, Canadian democracy that has inspired American democracy and has been inspired by it is undoubtedly one of the most highly respected realities throughout the world.

The clauses of the Free Trade Agreement and the appeal tribunal that will decide on its orientations or perhaps its exaggerations are living proof of the open-mindedness between Canada and the United States.

[English]

The free trade negotiations may have been more arduous between those who set the rules for their respective countries than we suspect, but they have been, on another level, a model of friendship which has not passed unnoticed in far away countries that will be linked together in 1992 by a common market between nations and people who, in the past, have been more often enemies than friends.

● (1010)

Our free trade treaty ratifies the openness and friendship of one of the longest frontiers in the world and will recall to other countries that there was never division, dissent or revolution between our two countries, which we French-speaking citizens all over the world often call, respectfully,

[Translation]

the mouse and the elephant,

[English]

meaning that proportions between the United States and Canada are akin to what ex-Prime Minister Trudeau once described—and I was present in the National Press Club in Washington—as “sleeping next to an elephant.” He added, “However friendly is the beast we feel every twitch and every grunt.”

Honourable senators, the very fact that a treaty of that nature will be signed soon—because Canadians expressed their confidence in its value on November 21—will demonstrate to the world that it is possible to come to terms with an overwhelming military and industrial power, because it is also possible, in a fraternal entente cordiale, to share the inventiveness of millions with the artistic incentive of thousands and yet be influenced in the right directions in cultural and industrial matters. Competition with the United States, when well understood, can be stimulating. This is precisely what the Free Trade Agreement suggests to older countries that have been traditionally at odds with each other.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, although many of us, individually and as an institution, have thought that these agreements with the United States could be a danger to the vitality of some of our industries, it is nevertheless true that any open-mindedness or freer trade between a weaker country and a stronger one is

[Senator Chaput-Rolland.]

irrefutable evidence that if the peoples of the earth wanted to reach agreements as we did with the United States, they could.

Canada is a prime example of a democracy that is based more on people's spiritual than material interests.

Honourable senators, let me say aloud that I did not come to the Senate to support those who for partisan reasons want to abolish or radically transform our parliamentary system. To be sure, I, like many others, reserve the right, if you allow me, one day to make some suggestions that I have accumulated during my career. At a time of free trade with our neighbours, protecting what distinguishes our institutions from theirs seems to me to be a supreme imperative for the vitality of our national identities.

The more we weaken our British traditions to which we are all attached, francophones, English-speaking people or those from any other country who have come to live with us, the more we model them on those created by the great American people, the faster, perhaps, we will disappear into our neighbours' melting pot. Honourable senators, although I am not naïve enough at my age

[English]

to believe and say that Meech Lake and free trade are of the same cement, I see both of these accords as conducive to a stronger Canada, because I cannot, and will not, accept the belief that our country and our central government might be weakened by the strength of our regions. Those who assert such false statements are precisely those who want a strong country at the expense of weak regions.

[Translation]

Honourable senators, I did not accept the invitation to sit here after living through difficult times

[English]

to sit and sleep on things I want to tell you but to stand on the principles in which I have believed for the last 35 years. I do not intend to impose my will on others—and why should I? I also do not intend to display disrespect for the majority of Liberal senators. Yet I wish to say as clearly as I can that, when a majority of non-elected members believes that it has inherited a morality of decisions, then it does not serve its country nor its party very well.

**Senator McElman:** That is your opinion.

**Senator Chaput-Rolland:** Yes, it is.

● (1020)

[Translation]

The four new senators from Quebec have the honour to represent not only the choice made by the Prime Minister of Canada—to whom I express my gratitude—but also that of that province—to whom I also express my gratitude—following Premier Bourassa's decision to put us on his list. I, for one, will demonstrate first and foremost the respect which non-elected representatives should have for the legislative will of elected representatives. In my opinion, any infringement on this political order of things would only tend to frustrate the electoral democratic process which I hold in high esteem.