

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

The election of a Progressive Conservative Member in the Outremont riding was not an accident of history which brought yours truly to the forefront. In fact it reflects a new orientation, a new trust and consensus which have their roots among the very diverse groups which live in that riding.

I have been able to witness that beyond the deep-rooted prejudices fed by many generations of a so-called elite, my Outremont riding is undoubtedly the most representative of our Canadian mosaic.

The Quebec men and women who live there represent the two founding nations of our country, together with representatives of about twenty ethnic groups who speak some forty languages and dialects, in addition to one or the other of our official languages. These cultural communities were particularly sensitive to what was at stake during the election campaign and they listened with their ears and hearts to the debate during these seven dramatic weeks.

My Outremont constituents expressed what a majority of Canadians from every corner of our great country wanted. These Quebec men and women expressed their confidence in the future of our country and favoured a still greater opening to the rest of the world. I should like to repeat part of what I said the first time in the House, and I quote: "My colleague from Vancouver Centre (Ms. Campbell) quoted our Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) who said on a number of occasions that wealth is created by the citizens rather than by the Government". It could reasonably be said also that it is not the economy which governs the men and women of a country, but that it is they who govern the economy.

Our colleague the Hon. Member for Langelier (Mr. Loiselle) spoke in a manner which is to the credit of the Progressive Conservative Party, its leader and members. We can bear witness, through the manner in which all Quebecers participated in the national debate on the most significant issue of the recent election campaign, that Quebec fully shares this confidence in our capacity to meet head on the new challenges brought about by the globalisation of trade.

Quebeckers in large numbers joined their voices with those of millions of Canadians who feel that free trade is an expression of national affirmation based on openness as opposed to withdrawal, on self-confidence as opposed to cold panic in the face of new horizons.

Unlike the people in other parts of Canada, they were not afraid of jeopardizing their national identity. They had the opportunity earlier in this decade to reassert

their identity. To Quebecers, the enhancement of our trade relations with our southern neighbours in no way means a harmful loss of national identity.

The debate in Quebec did not amount to an identity crisis as it did in the rest of the country. I have said it before, the people of Quebec went through that earlier, during the independence debate. Nowadays, they do not fear an American invasion. Their identity is not centered on the risk of losing their language or their political status within Confederation. The issues about the French language, Meech Lake, Bill 101, or the sign language are not based on hostility, fear, withdrawal or weakness . . . as some people would like to think.

Nor are they based on a bellicose attitude, or a superiority complex, or aggressiveness against the other founding nation.

I think, Mr. Speaker, that the battle of the Plains of Abraham is over, and has been over for some time. Some people may still be a little sensitive. Some people may still feel a little frustrated, but, on November 21, the people in Quebec wholeheartedly approved free trade and its impact. That was not the action of an impulsive and neurotic people.

On November 21, Quebec was not boasting. Quebec does not go around bragging and boasting. What is happening today in Quebec cannot be qualified as unrestrained emotivity or bragging. Quebec has not responded to meaningless slogans, such as the "c'est clair et net" message of the Liberal Party. Quebec has not responded to the theoretical and harmful social democracy of the NDP. Quebec responded to the Right Honorable Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), who urges us to work hard, harder and hardest.

Allow me to digress a bit, Mr. Speaker, by saying that this same Québec is defining itself with respect to signage. It still thinks Québec. It still thinks Canada. It is not hostile, aggressive, ungrateful or hateful. It does not want to be insolent. It is what it is, not more, but not less. It is different. It is more and more conscious and more and more certain of its individual and collective future.

In 1984, it voted for Mr. Mulroney and it wasn't a fad. It was a clear choice. Québec had had enough of the Liberal government's haughtiness, intolerance, pedantry, theatrics and arrogance. It had attained a maturity which gave it enough self-confidence, autonomy and flexibility to be able to say no to separation, no to this mockery of a constitution, no to schizophrenic dreams. It said yes to Mr. Mulroney just as it said yes to Mr.