

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Why do we not have supply management for all of agriculture and concentrate solely on the domestic market? The answer to that is very simple, Mr. Chairman. It lies in the fact that 50 per cent of our agricultural income comes from exports. If we did not have access to those markets, we would lose, it would seem logical, 50 per cent of our agricultural community. We depend on that market, and the Free Trade Agreement gives us access to that market. That is why the cattle producers of Western Canada and cattle producers throughout Canada for the large part are so keen on the Free Trade Agreement.

In fact, the Canadian Cattleman's Association has been very impatient with us, even though as a Government we were committed to free trade, by the fact that we have not moved more quickly in that direction. That is why the Canadian pork producers are so supportive. They know we sell 30 per cent of our hogs into the U.S. If we do not have access to that market, then our own hog industry is in jeopardy.

As I travelled throughout this last campaign, I visited my Hutterite Colonies. Even the Hutterites do not always vote or as often as they should. Even though traditionally they do not take a great deal of interest in federal politics, this time they did because they are hog producers. They know in Manitoba how much they are dependent upon the American market. I think to a greater degree than ever before they voted as a result of that and they voted in favour of free trade because they voted for their own economic livelihood.

During the course of the campaign I heard many people express fears about the Free Trade Agreement. It is important to try to dispel those fears. People were afraid that somehow or other the deal was a threat to our social programs. Yet, when you asked our opposition where in the agreement is there a reference to social programs, they conceded there was none.

People were afraid, as we all know, that there was a threat to medicare. Yet when you asked the opposition where in the agreement is there a reference to medicare, they conceded there was none. People were afraid that there was some sort of threat to our cultural identity. Yet when you asked the opposition to refer to where in the agreement our cultural identity was threatened by the Free Trade Agreement, they conceded that there was no evidence. The opposition talked about a threat to our energy and to our livelihood and our ability to obtain control of energy. There was much confusion about pricing. Some of my opponents said that we could not sell energy to our customers for more than we sold it

in Canada. That is not true, Mr. Chairman. In fact, Quebec Hydro has demonstrated that it can sell hydroelectricity to the State of New York at three times the price it sells to the Province of Quebec.

We, in the Province of Manitoba, have a massive development project in the North. The limestone does not make any sense to us unless we have access to American markets. There is no sense whatever. We produce hydroelectricity at a surplus. Under the Free Trade Agreement we will have a greater likelihood of developing long-term, vital long-term markets, for hydroelectricity in the U.S. The Free Trade Agreement will prevent the coal industry in North Dakota from setting import tariffs against that hydroelectricity going into the U.S.

What about the fear expressed so often that in times of shortage we would have to sell our resources to the United States and could not look after our own interests? Unfortunately, sometimes we have short memories sometimes. Many of us have forgotten that Canada and other nations entered into agreements early in the 1970s specifying that in times of shortage there will be a sharing according to existing contracts in proportion with existing contracts. For example, if we in Manitoba sell 20 per cent of our electricity into the United States and consume 80 per cent of it ourselves and there is, for some reason, a shortfall in Manitoba we have agreed, and it seems to me morally logical as well as the law of the land at the moment to share that shortfall for the duration of that contract. The Americans would not have it any other way and we would not sell energy if it were any other way. If we were the customer, we would not have it any other way either.

The Free Trade Agreement is complex. Any document written by lawyers is inevitably complex.

Some Hon. Members: No.

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): I am afraid that is true. It is a make-work project by lawyers. If we could all understand what lawyers wrote, perhaps we would not need lawyers.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark (Brandon—Souris): I say that facetiously, of course. It is difficult to read legalese and it is not exciting to read. It reminds me of some of the history texts which I read and even some of the material which I have written, none of which is exciting to read. It is still