

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

to young Canadians, and I have talked to our older Canadian citizens from almost every walk of life. I have marvelled once again at the sheer diversity of our country and the spirit which pulls us together as a nation. It is a spirit not easily expressed. Such words do not come easily to Canadians, someone who works the land in Saskatchewan, digs a mine in Kirkland Lake, runs a business in Montreal, fishes for salmon off Vancouver Island, or types memos in a Winnipeg office tower. However, I tell you the feeling is there. It is there in every Canadian and it is strong. It is a sense of belonging to a unique nation. It is living in a very special place.

[Translation]

And Canadians, better than any other nation, appreciate unity in diversity. That is why our country is officially and firmly bilingual and multicultural. Instead of homogenizing our citizens, our regions and our cultures, we cherish our differences because they make us unique, rich, proud, tolerant and responsible. Granted, harmony in diversity demands maturity, vision and great openness of mind. Striking this fragile balance is a challenge we must meet every moment, every day, with patience and perspicacity, without flinching and without ever abdicating our responsibility.

[English]

We love this country. It is precious to us. Because we love this country, what we have built and what we stand for as Canadians, we will not allow it to be thrown away by the Government.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): What the Government is telling us to do in this trade deal is to close our eyes, sign away our future as Canadians and the right to shape the destiny and direction of our country. It is telling us to give up that which is most vital to us, our sovereignty, our way of life, the way we do things.

In exchange for what? In exchange for a leap of faith which even the Government's most optimistic predictions describe as having only marginal economic benefits.

Yet the Prime Minister and other advocates of this deal, like the dream merchants of another era, paint a picture of wealth and prosperity, as he did this afternoon, of unrivalled riches unheard of in history, or certainly in contemporary economic reality.

It is inarguably a very attractive sales pitch. Free trade. Who is against free trade? Who is against anything free? Positive words. Seductive words. Easy rhetoric. Free trade. Free gift. Free lunch. Yet Canadians know there is no free lunch, there is always a price, and the price of this deal is just too high. The price is unacceptable.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The price is our sovereignty, our freedom to make our own choices, to decide what is

right for us, to go on building the kind of country we want. That freedom, that sovereignty, is our most valuable asset. When you strip away all the technical jargon of this deal, that is what the Government wants to give away, our freedom to be different, our freedom to be ourselves, to do things our own way, not the American way.

We admire the Americans. We share many of the same hopes and goals. We are fortunate to have them as neighbours. We are proud to have them as friends. Yet as much as we respect and admire our American friends we do not want to become Americans.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): The United States is certainly the most powerful democracy in the world, but it is not the only democracy. It is not the only country that values its independence and its freedoms and its ability to make its own choices. So do we. We have chosen to make a separate place for ourselves on the northern half of this continent. We have chosen to do it in a different way. They may not see it. They may not recognize it. But we are different.

The Americans were born of revolution. We were born of the joining of British and French traditions. Their Constitution calls for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. The British North America Act called for peace, order, and good government. The United States is a categorical country. Stephen Decatur perhaps put it best once when he said: "My country, may it always be right, but right or wrong, my country".

For an American "you are either with us or against us". Choices are clear-cut. We Canadians instinctively seek a consensus and a compromise.

● (1700)

While both countries are federal states, they have a highly centralized Government in Washington. Ours is much less so. Even the largest of the states like California and New York do not compare to the overwhelming influence in our own confederation of Ontario and Quebec.

The American frontier was explored and settled with the discovery of California. The American frontier is closed. Our frontier remains open. Our frontier is the North, and it is very important to us. We look northward as a nation. We value the resources of our North, we treasure its ecology, and we admire its people. We are deeply concerned about the militarization of the Arctic. As we look around the Pole we feel kinship for Scandinavians, Russians, and Alaskans.

The Americans put all their faith in market forces. Yes, we believe in enterprise and we believe in rewarding success, but as Canadians we have the ultimate goals of fairness and sharing. We feel that those purposes have been accomplished better in a mixed economy.