

time in my life have I been seized with such profound and mixed feelings of humility, potential, and fulfilment in being a Canadian citizen as I do today.

For the reality of being here I must again express my appreciation to the citizens in Fredericton and the surrounding area of York—Sunbury for their confidence and support in the recent election. I want them to know, each one, that I come to this House on their behalf with keen awareness of the responsibilities and opportunities which exist to be of service to them and to all Canadians. To the best of my ability I shall seek so to serve, to discharge those responsibilities, and to seize those opportunities as fully as possible at all times.

It is a special pleasure for me to have participated in the re-election of Mr. Speaker to the chair. He is not here this evening and I hope the Chair will convey these sentiments to him. I want to express my congratulations to him upon the well deserved honour and respect which he has been accorded by all Hon. Members. Hopefully he may recall another occasion, in New Brunswick, when I was privileged to participate in an event which honoured him. In that case it was for his contribution to management and conservation of Atlantic salmon. I want him and this House to know that he remains held in high esteem by New Brunswickers, as by all Canadians, for his long history of service to our country in so many ways.

Had he been here I was going to say directly to him that he would know from his own visits to the rivers of New Brunswick that our province is a land of beauty and serenity, containing a special quality of life which is becoming increasingly rare throughout the world and not easily found even in many parts of Canada any more. In my view it is that quality of life in New Brunswick, in fact throughout Atlantic Canada and abundant in my own riding of Fredericton, which is our most undervalued and underrated asset. I believe it constitutes a key resource for development and realization of our unique future potential.

Let me be clear. New Brunswick's quality of life is not just comprised of such features as its beautiful landscape and superb salmon fishing. It is much more than that. Indeed, first of all, the quality of life in New Brunswick springs from its human resources, its people.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, as all Hon. Members will recognize, New Brunswick is the best concrete example in Canada of an officially bilingual society living and working in harmony. Men and women of this province clearly

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

demonstrated that tolerance of and respect for one another can contribute towards the enrichment of the Canadian mosaic. The same qualities are reflected in our appreciation of the ethnic and cultural diversity enjoyed in New Brunswick.

With the new legislation on Canadian multiculturalism, there now exists in New Brunswick a dynamic trend recognizing the richness of the various cultures found in our province. Furthermore, numerous discussions have taken place regarding the implementation of multicultural programs as proposed in the new legislation.

[English]

Those rich human resources of New Brunswick, coupled with its abundance of natural features, are the essence of our attractive way of life which is so well exemplified within the boundaries of my own riding of Fredericton, the capital city area of our province.

I want to emphasize that in New Brunswick, indeed the entire Atlantic region, there is an important correlation between our quality of life and our economic potential; between the attraction of living in our region and the prospects for prospering offered by free trade; between the desire of so many of our young citizens to make their lives in the Maritimes; and the increased opportunities which the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement will bring to them to find productive carriers in their home area of Canada.

There is no region in Canada which has more potential to benefit from free trade than Atlantic Canada. While we have always possessed the human and natural resources to prosper, and in fact prior to Confederation the Maritimes was arguably the most prosperous area of Canada, during the subsequent economic evolution of our country, however, markets became centralized in Quebec and Ontario to the unfortunate disadvantage of Canada's extremities, particularly the Maritimes. In fact, Confederation itself helped to extinguish the flow and pattern of north-south trade on which the Maritimes had built its early prosperity.

Therefore, the Free Trade Agreement is an opportunity to rectify, or at least moderate, a major adverse side effect of Confederation, a side effect which has become an unfortunate and lasting phrase of frustration in Canada's economic language, "regional economic disparity".

At long last we have before us on the economic horizon virtually a new frontier, one which holds real promise for an eventual and lasting solution to regional