

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

sometimes to the north, as we are now. I note with pleasure that it has not been since the year 1908 that the Prince Edward County portion of my riding has been represented in the House by a Liberal. That is 80 years, and I am proud to be the Liberal they chose to break that span.

Some Hon. Members: hear, hear!

Mr. Vancief: We live in a great country, one that is envied by everyone else in the world. We have a tremendous resource of many nationalities, and a geography and climate that provide us with one of the most varied bases of natural resources, agriculture, fishing, manufacturing, mining, and logging. Many countries in the world cannot boast of all of those.

I would like Hon. Members to take a moment and think about my next statement. No matter what we sit on, no matter what we wear, no matter where we are, and no matter what we look at, there are four creators of wealth in the world. Those are fishing, mining, logging, and agriculture. There is nothing on the face of the earth that did not come from one of those. We have all of these in Canada, and it is our background and privileged duty as Members of the House of Commons to protect the strength of all of them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Vancief: If all of these are not strong, our economy will not be strong. I do not have the time tonight to discuss all of them, but I would like to discuss some of the concerns of the people in Prince Edward about how some of these are connected to the Free Trade Agreement that we have been debating for the last two weeks. I know that it is too late to make changes, but I wish to express their thoughts. I promised I would. They asked me to, and I would like to take a few minutes to do so on their behalf.

We have been told that this is a commercial document, that it can be changed in six months if it does not go well. Is this any way to instil confidence in the people of Canada? If this deal does not work, it will be very difficult to correct. I liken it to scrambling an egg and attempting to get it back in the shell.

I say to Members opposite that it better work, for the sake of Canada.

Donald Macdonald recommended further trading arrangements with the United States. He did not recommend this one. He said that there should be no deal unless we had the protection from further ability of

the United States to place countervail duties on Canadian goods entering the United States, and that we should have a level playing field. I agree with him. I would not be as concerned about this deal if we had that, but we do not have a level playing field. Unfortunately, this deal does not provide us with that benefit.

I have had a fair bit of experience in my life with the process of negotiations. I do not feel that this agreement was well made. From my experience, no matter how hard one party works to make a deal or an agreement, if another group or party looks at it, they look at it with different eyes, and they look at it in all fairness. There is always room for improvements. There is no such thing as the perfect deal. However, we have been told that this is a perfect deal. The Government has stated that it is a perfect deal, "trust us".

About a year ago now I attended a meeting in my riding chaired by the former Member for my riding who sat on the other side of the House. We had a considerable discussion about the agreement. It was a good discussion.

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However, he continued to tell us that there really wasn't anything wrong with the deal. I finally said: "Fess up, Jack. There is no such thing as a perfect deal. There is no such thing as a one-sided deal."

However, I guess I must have been mistaken, because the U.S. Congress took less than a day to pass it. They think it is a good deal. The answer back from Mr. Ellis, on my asking whether there was anything wrong with this deal for Canadians, was: "Well, I can only make one comment, Mr. Vancief. The grape growers in Canada are S.O.L." And I think, Mr. Speaker, that stands for "sure out of luck"—but I am not sure.

That type of answer, Mr. Speaker, did not then nor does it now, assure the residents of Prince Edward—Hastings or the people of Canada generally that good times are ahead, as we are being told by the Government of the day. We want some reassurance, and not just the statement: "Trust me."

In fact, we see very little in this deal that is concrete enough to make us feel reassured.

And then we hear people like Clayton Yeutter, the U.S. Trade Representative who negotiated this deal, make the following statement, and I quote: "The Canadians don't understand what they have signed. In 20 years they will be sucked into the U.S. economy."