

The one thing that the working men and women in Canada will agree on is this: if this Government is going to commit this country to an economic course paid for with the jobs of our workers, then this Government had better have the programs to assist in the adaptation and retraining of those workers, or it won't be the Government for long.

One very interesting element of this trade negotiation with the United States has been the need to look closely again at the unique relationship between our two countries, a relationship that has preoccupied Canadians for two centuries, primarily because of our relative closeness geographically and culturally.

It is, I think, because we are so close to the United States of America, because we cast a shadow on each other along the border, that we have difficulty measuring our relationship objectively. It is that confusion over our relationship which hinders our ability to address this trade agreement objectively.

It is precisely because we are so close to each other that we resist being drawn closer together under this trade agreement. This is not anti-American. This is healthy Canadian self-interest. The closer our two countries get, the more we sweat. Under this agreement we will pull our country closer to the precipice, and all on the promise of a few dollars more, a few jobs more.

I am saddened to hear some Hon. Members on the other side of this place describe this agreement as the key to prosperity or the ticket to the future, without realizing how close we are to abandoning our tools of nation-building.

If we are to maintain and improve our society and increase our prosperity, it will occur because Canadians work hard for it and not because we deal or barter for it.

My conclusion, Mr. Speaker, is in reaching this agreement we have given up far more in the bargain than we have obtained. If this trade agreement was just the mutual elimination of tariffs, which it could have been, we could freely address the future proudly as a nation. But such is not the case. This agreement is much, much more. It is that way because the Americans bargained for those other things, and we gave them away.

If we are to have this agreement, then we will not abandon our workers, we will not pay royalties to exercise our cultural sovereignty, we will not neglect rural and agricultural Canada and native Canadians, we will not permit erosion of needed social programs, and

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we will never abandon or sell our independence to continue to build this country and provide its citizens with the opportunities essential for their future.

I know that if this legislation is made law, all Members on both sides of the House will address the 10 years of transition to full implementation with those objectives in mind.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (2120)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Jean-Pierre Hogue (Outremont): It is as the first representative of the Progressive Conservative Party ever to sit in the House of Commons as a Member for Outremont in this century that I humbly rise again today. On this occasion, I wish to address my first remarks to those men and women whom I have the honour to represent in the House. I wish to thank the individuals who, through the exercise of their democratic rights, gave me a majority during the recent election campaign.

They represented every walk of life and reflected the exceptional diversity of Canadians and Québécois which we can find everywhere in our great country. My Outremont constituents have nothing in common with the nincompoops our honourable friends opposite like to describe. On the contrary, they are quite vibrant. They can breathe, think, they are intelligent, they can assess, weigh, and they have needs which they try to satisfy either individually or collectively.

As I said, the men and women in my Outremont riding resemble those you can meet in all the other provinces of Canada. They know what is good for them. They can put things into perspective. They are tolerant. That is why when the chips were down, in the evening of November 21, they chose Mr. Mulroney and the Progressive Conservative Party. Like the rest of Canada, they gave the country more representatives from our party than did the other two parties together. People have decided and they gave the Government a clear mandate to govern. They elected a leader they could trust. They rejected all the candidates who did not know where to stand or who, for lack of a definite program, were involved in a witch hunt.

I want to thank them also for electing a majority government, thereby clearly expressing their support for the agreement we are debating today.