

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

that maybe in the haste there were some mistakes or some oversights. My hon. colleague proposed, as have many others, a series of amendments that we would like to put forward, to have them discussed and responded to. That has not been possible.

We have made those comments and suggestions in the light of what we perceive to be a need to ensure that there be some bench-marks, some capacity on the part of ordinary Canadians to assess where we are going, to be able to judge for themselves whether or not the free trade deal is unfolding as the universe should.

In closing, I would like to say this. I wish to be clear on it. I have tremendous respect for people who are loyal to their friends. I have had the pleasure and honour of knowing the Prime Minister since we were both boys. He is a man who values friendship, who gives it, who respects loyalty and values it as well. In the case of this Free Trade Agreement I would only point out that the chief negotiator may have had an agenda of his own. I do not know what it was. I hope that the Prime Minister and his Government do not feel that they are honour bound or in some way restricted in their capacity to assess on an ongoing basis what this Free Trade Agreement is doing for and to Canada.

With all due respect to Peter Newman and the people who quoted the article in *Maclean's* magazine about the assessment of the performances of recent Prime Ministers, if this free trade deal is a good thing for Canada and for its people, business people, senior citizens, the poor, the working people, then everybody in this House and everybody in this country will be very happy. Most likely, as with most deals, there will be good sides to it and less interesting sides to it.

I ask for the Prime Minister and the Government to make sure that mechanisms are in place to take into consideration many valid concerns raised not just in the House but more and more on a daily basis outside the House by thoughtful people. They must ensure that regardless of what Peter Newman thinks, when history judges the Prime Minister and this Government on free trade that in fact it is a forward-looking and progressive instrument of economic development, and that his contribution to history be remembered in a positive light and that he not go down as another R. B. Bennett. When one does not have the economic tools, when one does not have the economic capacity or the economic sovereignty, it is difficult to maintain the social programs that has made Canada a distinct and a great country.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Willie Littlechild (Wetaskiwin): Mr. Speaker, it is certainly with the greatest of pride that I rise in this Chamber today. First, because it is with great honour that I can thank the Great Spirit for this historic occasion. It is an occasion that allows me to serve as a Member of Parliament for Wetaskiwin, but especially as the first treaty Indian to be elected to this House.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Littlechild: As it is my first speech, I would like to add on behalf of our constituency belated congratulations to you, Mr. Speaker, and to your colleagues for being re-elected to a very important job.

With your permission, Mr. Speaker, I would like to on this very special occasion for me and my people say a few words in Cree.

[English translation from Cree]

Thank you very much to my family: Omahikan Pimotayo, the late Chief Dan Minde, Mrs. Justine Littlechild, Oskinikee's brothers, sisters and other relatives for continued support throughout this new challenge.

I would also like to thank all the leaders and members of the Four Nations, especially the elders for their guidance and prayers.

This is a great day. For the first time we will be able to have direct input into matters that affect us. I am proud to represent Hobbema.

[English]

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Littlechild: At the outset, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those people in Wetaskiwin who made a positive statement by their support and confidence. Thank you to all my campaign volunteers, a team of winners like the Wetaskiwin Relics. This is a responsibility, Sir, that I take very seriously.

Also, I thank my family: Helen, Teddi, Neil and Megan. On their behalf I want to wish all our constituents in Alberta, Indian country and all of Canada, the very best of the Christmas Season and, certainly, the very best in the New Year.

If I may I would like briefly to introduce to Hon. Members my constituency of Wetaskiwin, one that has been very ably served for four terms by my predecessor, Mr. Stan Schellenberger. I want to register our sincere