

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

from the 1984 campaign because people really wanted to know. Canadians wanted to know about free trade and how it would affect their futures and their lives. I found the campaign exhilarating and a tremendous opportunity to explain both the rationale and the opportunities the Government's initiatives would provide our young people as they head into the 21st century.

Let me return to why we brought forward this proposal for a free trade agreement with the United States. Being from British Columbia, I look at it from a West Coast perspective. I look back to the history of my province and my forefathers who came from the Maritimes as traders. They came to the West Coast to enter into trade. My father was a trader with the Pacific Rim. That has been our history in Canada and British Columbia. We have developed tremendous capabilities in the field of trade with our resources, and central Canada has been able to turn many of its resources into manufactured goods.

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One of the problems on the West Coast has been that we got left out somewhere along the way. We have tremendous resources including oil and gas, forests, fish and coal, but because of the rules that had been in place, we never got much of an opportunity to change those resources from their raw form into a processed form by adding value, thereby adding jobs, to those resources. Just about the time when British Columbia as a society had matured and would have thought about getting into the manufacturing and processing industries, we were faced with horrendous trade barriers through tariffs.

My colleague from Vancouver Centre who so eloquently spoke on the Address in Reply to the Speech from the Throne last week talked about the fact that Cominco in Trail, British Columbia exports raw zinc which is subject to a 1 per cent tariff rather than processing it by turning it into an alloy because alloys are subject to 19 per cent tariffs. It has not made economic sense to bring that kind of processing into B.C.

Tariffs that were developed to protect the industries of central Canada work to the disadvantage of the growth of processing and manufacturing industries in B.C. I think that is why many people in B.C. view the Free Trade Agreement as being an opportunity finally to grow up.

Let me use an analogy which I find really rather appropriate as a woman and a mother. We protect our children when they are young and vulnerable and need

that protection. In our history as a country, perhaps we needed that kind of protection 100 or even 50 years ago, but as our children mature and reach adolescence, we let go of those barriers. Finally, when they come to maturity, we expect them to be able to stand on their own and make their own decisions, to be able to compete in the world at large. I would like to think that as Canadian business people, we have reached that stage of maturity. We do not need artificial protection. We can compete with the best of them.

We in British Columbia have shown that we can compete. We have shown that in the lumber industry. In 1981, we were faced with a very serious economic downturn in the lumber industry. We made changes and we become a highly competitive industry. We can compete anywhere in the world.

Let me bring this even closer to home, to my own riding. I would like to share a story with Hon. Members. When I was in my riding two weeks ago, I had the opportunity to participate in the dedication of the new Whistler Express. My colleagues will have to get used to me talking about Whistler a lot in the House because it has come into my riding. It is the best place in Canada to go downhill skiing. We now have the Blackcomb Wizard and now the Whistler Express, the fastest and longest gondola in North America.

The Whistler Express has been built over the past season in half the time it has taken to build a similar gondola anywhere in the world. The company that builds the gondola cars, which hold ten people and are very comfortable, contracted out to a company in Squamish which is also in my constituency. This company built the cars there. What took people in France 150 hours to do, to make one car, took 50 hours for those in Squamish to do one-third of the time.

Mr. McDermid: But we can't compete, Mary.

Mrs. Collins: No, we can compete. We showed that our workers can compete. In fact, representatives of the parent company was so astonished by this that they thought something was wrong, that perhaps there was no quality control. They came here and investigated and found that it took so little time because of the productivity of the workers in Squamish and their commitment to getting the job done. I think that is a commitment which exists not only in Squamish but right across the country. We have the best workers in the world, workers who can compete with anyone in the world, and we do not need artificial trade barriers.