

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Therefore, provincial support is of real significance when both parties within one legislature are in agreement, Mr. Speaker and this indeed should make the farming industry feel secure.

I have here a whole list of people from various sectors. I felt it would be useful to quote them, so as to avoid the accusation that we politicians are reveling in our own rhetoric.

Yves Saint-Vincent, Chairman of the Quebec Joint Committee on Slaughter Breeds, expressed support, Mr. Speaker. And I am quoting a Holstein producer, Mr. Louis Desaulniers from Saint-Boniface, who said something I remembered; I will quote his words because they come quite directly from the bottom of his heart: free trade is something that motivates me! Competition makes our product better, and when we have a superior product it becomes easy to compete with our American neighbors. When you play hockey in your own backyard, you feel you are good. If you compete with the big leagues, then you learn something. It is motivating. That is what free trade is all about, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Fortin, an economics professor at the *Université du Québec* in Montreal, on another aspect also said: "It's crazy to say that social programs are threatened. Just look at Sweden. That country is the most pro-free trade of all industrialized nations and it is also the most advanced in terms of social programs. The two are not contradictory; they go together." Mr. Speaker, that is yet another example from the academic community.

Another sector, Mr. Speaker, is very important. In many ways, it is considered a leader of Quebec's economy, namely the *Caisses populaires Desjardins*. The president of the *Mouvement des Caisses populaires Desjardins*, which has billions in assets, said this fall that the future of Quebec's agriculture was fundamental to the economic health of the province and that the Agreement in its present form would allow it to continue to grow.

The president said that after requesting a full report on the whole agri-food sector.

Mr. Speaker, I could give some more quotes, but what I want to stress above all is attitude. Yes, the attitude that our Government wanted to instill in Quebecers and Canadians, Mr. Speaker!

I listened to the new Member for LaSalle—Émard (Mr. Martin), who probably had to read a speech prepared some thirty years ago instead of another one—perhaps he searched through some old records. I was

horrified by what he said. He dared to say that our Party had no vision. That is the most awful thing! I jumped in my seat! We know that for the past year and a half Members opposite have been taking a negative approach. Not satisfied with fighting among themselves, their most original recommendation to Canadians was to tear up the trade deal. But in our case, Mr. Speaker, we threw a challenge to young people, to women, and to agricultural producers who are not people who feel sorry for themselves and mope all day long, unable to face competition. No, Sir, over the years these people have turned their industry into a prosperous growth-oriented undertaking which is not afraid to tackle any market in the world. That is what we needed, Mr. Speaker, a Party with a leader, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) who did not fail to instill in the nation a vision of the future and pave the way towards the 20th century. He did not look in the rear-view mirror, scared of his own shadow like Members opposite who would drag us back 50 years into the past.

I think we were able to... and Canadians did understand that last November 21. They gave us a fresh mandate. They gave a fresh mandate to Canadians who know where they are going. That is what we needed, that is what Canadians needed so badly. Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that we will reach our objective and do so with the Canadian people. They are with us, Mr. Speaker. That is what we need and I am sure that we will be able to get where we are going and that Canada's farm community, like Canada generally, can look forward to the prosperous future it deserves.

• (2010)

[English]

Ms. Lynn Hunter (Saanich—Gulf Islands): Mr. Speaker, I wish to begin by thanking the people of Saanich—Gulf Islands for the trust that they have placed in me by electing me as their Member of Parliament. I am proud to be the representative of Saanich—Gulf Islands, a riding blessed with breath-taking beauty and a gentle climate. The riding is bracketed by the campus of the University of Victoria at one end and by the Gulf Islands at the other. In between, the riding is comprised of wonderfully distinctive neighbourhoods and rolling farmland reaching down to the ocean.

All of the people of Saanich—Gulf Islands care deeply about the character of their communities, whether they are families who have lived there for generations, or those who have moved there because of the area's beauty and gentle climate.