

challenge facing the Government. Because of those concerns, and many others, I cannot support this deal.

Hon. Elmer M. MacKay (Minister of National Revenue): Mr. Speaker, since we may be spending Christmas Eve in this Chamber, in the spirit of the season I would like to extend best wishes to all of our colleagues here today, old and new. At the same time, Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment, and also the Hon. Member for Vancouver South (Mr. Fraser) upon his re-election to be the Speaker. All of the compliments which he has received he has richly deserved. I am sure all Members will agree that he will do his usual exemplary job in this Thirty-fourth Session of Parliament.

I would like to congratulate all new members, including my colleague, the Hon. Member for Ottawa Centre (Mr. Harb) who has just spoken so eloquently. It is a great thing to have facility in both our official languages. *J'aimerais pouvoir parler français. Malheureusement, c'est impossible.*

Unfortunately, I cannot speak in French. However, I am struck by the beauty of the French language, particularly with respect to certain phrases, such as *déjà vu*, *plus ça change*, and *plus c'est la même chose*.

By coincidence, the other day, when I was pondering this important measure I thought it would be interesting to put it in perspective. Therefore, I looked up some of the speeches from bygone Parliaments, including the speech of a great Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. Would you believe, colleagues, on March 7, 1911, Sir Wilfrid Laurier was talking about a form of free trade in the Parliament of Canada. Would you believe that he was talking about shingles and saying, as the Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie) said today in this Chamber, if we had duty-free status on shingles we would have no problems. Talk about *déjà vu*, Mr. Speaker.

Those of us who sat in this Chamber during the Thirty-third Parliament would agree that this measure has been debated. For the newer members, I can understand their alacrity and eagerness to get on with this and debate it. To quote the late Ogden Nash, one thing that Canadian politics might be very much the better for would be a more restricted use of simile and metaphor. We have heard a tremendous of debate on this measure. With the indulgence of the House, perhaps it would be useful to put this in perspective.

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

I have spoken about a great Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Wilfrid Laurier. On Page 4751 of *Hansard* for March 7, 1911, he stated:

Our object today is to open the door . . . of a nation of 90,000,000 which has been closed to us for the last 50 years . . .

Think of that, Mr. Speaker. This was a Canadian Prime Minister who, in those days, was saying that the 20th century would belong to Canada, and he was seeking new ways to broaden our economic prowess and open new vistas for us. In those days he talked about a nation of 90 million. Today, as we know, our neighbours to the south are almost three times that in population, and I dare say that the opportunities are three times as great.

We know that in 1854 there was a form of reciprocity between our two countries which did not survive the hostilities of the conflict between Britain and the United States, and later on the Civil War complicated things even further.

Various efforts were made in the 1870s, 1880s, and 1890s to proceed to return to the free trade ideal. However, these floundered because neither side was really ready until, as I mentioned, Sir Wilfrid Laurier made the attempt in 1911.

In the following two decades Canada and the United States learned to their regret what could happen without free trade. Passion and protectionism ruled supreme and the two nations built ever higher tariff barriers between them.

The spiral of ever-increasing protectionism was finally broken in 1935 when the two countries negotiated a modest but historic Most Favoured Nation Agreement. This accord marked the beginning of a bipartisan effort in Canada to expand trading opportunities for Canadian entrepreneurs. It was started by the Conservative Government of the late R. B. Bennett. It was concluded by the Liberals under Mackenzie King. Three years later the agreement was enlarged and improved, and it confirmed the commitment of both Governments to more Liberal trading conditions, a commitment that was pursued for the next 50 years.

As early as 1947, as some of us who are a bit long in the tooth will recall, a comprehensive free trade agreement was being negotiated between our two countries, but before the pact could be ratified, Prime Minister Mackenzie King concluded that the country was not ready for such an agreement and satisfied himself that GATT would serve for the time being.