

I want to say one more thing about Simon, whatever his credentials, and I believe that they are considerable in the area of negotiation; I will not downplay that. However, as a public servant, he has much to learn.

One of the most galling aspects of the last campaign was not only did we have to run against Canadian and American big business with their millions, with the Tories and the socialists thrown in as bystanders, we had to fight Simon as well. We were fighting the armchair expert, the person who was accountable to no one, save for the Prime Minister. We had to contend with his blow by blow analysis of what ought to be the case in terms of the governing of this country.

What a sham! The Prime Minister, had he had any understanding of the institutions of government at all, would have given the guy the flick for opening his mouth.

**An Hon. Member:** Give him the hook.

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne):** The Hon. Member for Elk Island, on debate.

**Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island):** Madam Speaker, it is indeed an honour and a great privilege to have this opportunity to speak in the Parliament of Canada during this historic free trade debate.

Before entering into my remarks in support of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, let me express my sincere appreciation to the fine people of the new constituency of Elk Island for their tremendous support of me and of the Progressive Conservative Party during the recent federal election.

The new federal riding of Elk Island was formed by combining sections of three other ridings: Vegreville, Pembina, and Wetaskiwin. Elk Island includes a special blend of agricultural, industrial and urban interests. The riding of Elk Island has a population of over 77,000 people. The people of Elk Island are a diverse, strong and vibrant people. They are hard working people, with high standards and values. Many are pioneers or descendants of pioneers who, through determination and hard work, have built the modern thriving community in which they live.

The main population centres in Elk Island are Sherwood Park, Fort Saskatchewan, and Beaumont. Elk Island also includes the communities of Lamont, Chipman, St. Michael, Bruderheim, Josephberg, Ardrossan, New Sarepta, Looma, Rollie View, and Hay Lakes.

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

I am honoured, Madam Speaker, to represent the good people of Elk Island, all of whom contribute to a very rich cultural mosaic. In addition to a large number of people of British descent, over 7,000 of the residents of Elk Island share German ethnic backgrounds, and nearly 6,000 are of Ukrainian heritage.

We are also proud to have a significant French component and a significant Dutch component.

We are indeed culturally rich in Elk Island, with fine people from many cultures in addition to those I have already mentioned, including Poles, aboriginal people, Chinese, South Asian, and others.

As we are in the Christmas season, Madam Speaker, let me offer to all of the good people of Elk Island, on behalf of my wife and our children, my sincere best wishes for a healthy, happy and peaceful holiday season. As well, on behalf of all of us in the riding of Elk Island, please let me extend our very best wishes to all Canadians from coast to coast for a joyous and pleasant holiday season.

It is a great honour for me, Madam Speaker, to speak in the Parliament of Canada today, and I should like specifically to express my appreciation to my parents, Nicholas and Mary O'Kurley, who helped me to develop a respect and a love for Canada.

I will be speaking in favour of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, Madam Speaker. I believe it is an agreement that is good for Elk Island, and we in Elk Island believe that it will be good for Alberta and for Canada.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. O'Kurley:** We, the people of Canada, have just come through one of the most important elections in Canadian history. The voters in my riding, as in other parts of Canada, were faced with a major issue. The issue was not necessarily just free trade; the real issue in the election campaign was economic management. Free trade was only a part of the larger over-all issue of managing Canada's economy.

Canadians from sea to sea elected a Progressive Conservative majority Government because they believe that this Party is the one most capable of maintaining economic stability and managing Canada's economic future.

In Elk Island, 85 per cent of eligible voters turned out to deliver their message, and the message was a resounding "yes" to Prime Minister Mulroney's Progressive