

I raise those questions because during the debate before the initialling of the agreement, grave concerns were expressed in various parts of the country that we were somehow going to put at risk our ability to deal with regional development; put at risk our ability to encourage our cultural industry; put at risk those other elements of a distinctive Canadian life. Well, Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen, none of those is at risk.

There were some near moments during the negotiations, but our negotiators were strong and were effective and none of those is at risk. Indeed, it is my view as a Minister of the Crown, whose responsibility is to exercise Canada's sovereignty internationally and on a daily basis, it is my view that this trade agreement, far from limiting the distinctive nature or the independence of Canada, will increase, as a practical matter, the independence of Canada.

It is my job, as Foreign Minister, to have Canada act following Canadian interests in the world. And I am absolutely convinced that this agreement will extend our ability to pursue our own goals in the world. And that is for two major reasons. The first, I have referred to, it is affordability. Anybody here ever hear of the Polar Sea. The icebreaker controversy a couple of summers ago. What was our problem then with the Americans. The problem wasn't one of notice, our problem was that we did not have an icebreaker that could keep up with their icebreaker. And they were going through our waters and we were trying to assert sovereignty without the means to enforce sovereignty. But we are building an icebreaker, but it is going to be expensive because sovereignty, like anything of value in this country is expensive. Icebreakers are expensive. Countries that rely on trade and are falling behind and have economies that are falling behind can't afford to buy icebreakers. Can't afford in other words to assert their sovereignty in their North.

Take another little example here in foreign affairs. One of the distinctive roles of this country, one of the things that make us rather unique in the world, is that we have a very good army, a very good armed forces. But several years ago, a predecessor of mine, Lester B. Pearson, made original decisions as a Minister. We decided that we were going to pioneer a new idea in the world, and that was that armed forces would be used for keeping peace as well as for fighting wars. And so we are very much involved in peacekeeping operations. Well peacekeeping is