

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

a positive way. The business community responded positively to the policies of this Government. We saw major success stories—something which the Opposition doesn't like to talk about. One can see them cringe when reference is made to firms such as General Motors Diesel, a company which, in 1984, had tremendous problems, with few prospects for the future. That company took advantage of this Government's policies, took advantage of the strong economic environment created by this Government and began to build on that, to the point where it now has a North American mandate for the manufacture of locomotives.

• (2010)

This is a success story. This company makes locomotives and competes with the finest in the world. That was recognized by General Motors management when they closed the plant in the U.S. to enhance the operation in London—Middlesex. Now, of course, with more than 2,000 workers and many small businesses involved, we are starting to see what free trade will mean to Canadians. Companies will grow and prosper and provide a future for Canadian workers.

Some people on the streets say to me: "Terry, you are right, but that is big business. What is going to happen with small business? I work at a little company. Where is my future?" That is a very good question and a very real concern because the majority of Canadians work in small companies. Indeed, we have already heard from the Canadian Federation of Independent Business which indicated a majority of the owners and managers of its membership supported the agreement, but what happens on the street? What happens to the ordinary worker?

In London—Middlesex we have overwhelming evidence that the small business cannot do anything but prosper. As a matter of fact I have one example, Knechtel Mill Works. A small company in 1984 with under 20 employees, it had some innovative technology, an innovative Government that provided the proper economic parameters to operate within, and now has over 100 employees. The business has gone sky high and there are opportunities for many, many people. The company is taking advantage of this agreement because 80 per cent of its trade is with the U.S. and it is looking for more because it knows it can compete.

That company was able to train workers to use the new technology in window-making. The Canadian Jobs Strategy provided that training and the company in turn became very competitive and innovative and went into

that market and provided jobs and opportunities and futures for many, many Canadians.

It is not just big companies that this agreement is good for, it is good for little companies that will grow and prosper and provide futures for our young people.

I think those are two reasons why the electorate in London—Middlesex said, when it got right down to the crunch, that we had better be with this Government because it has a vision for the future which ties in with our beliefs, and so they voted for the Government.

Along the way I was a little disappointed because the election campaign became so involved with the free trade issue that one of the most important issues to the electorate in my riding, indeed Canadians everywhere, the environment, was hardly discussed. Clearly our Government has delivered on the environment. It has only just begun to deliver.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clifford: I am glad the Opposition is finally awake. I want to talk about some of these things. There is page after page of achievements. Some Members opposite are new to this House. I do not know if they have done their homework, but it is very significant that the first effects of the International Conference on Ozone Depletion will be felt on January 1, 1989. We are going to see the results.

An Hon. Member: Tell us about acid rain.

Mr. Clifford: I am coming to that. We have already seen in the Environmental Protection Act some bold new steps. We have seen a reduction and will see a further reduction in the amount of lead in gasoline. We have taken hundreds of steps that will add to the quality of life for Canadians. This was all forgotten in the election. Maybe the Opposition did not really want it to come out.

Some people recognized the situation. Norwegian Prime Minister Brundtland, who chaired the UN World Commission on Environment and Development, paid tribute to Canada's leadership in June when she addressed the Canadian Government's International Conference on the Changing Atmosphere in Toronto. She said:

I thank the Canadian Government, in particular Prime Minister Mulroney and Environment Minister McMillan, for their commitment and for the example they have been setting for other industrialized countries.