

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

This means 250,000 new jobs for young Canadians, over and above current predictions, and I think that if we can create that many new jobs for Canadian youth, it is good for Canada and we must do even more.

Parts of the Canadian economy will undergo reshaping and restructuring in order to meet the challenge of world competition and to seize the opportunities for growth, for innovation and for greater prosperity in all regions of Canada. Mr. Speaker, this challenge must be met head on and to the benefit of all Canadians.

The trade union movement has an important and constructive role to play. I believe Canada's labour leaders will take their place at the table and join the dialogue in order to advance the interests of their members and contribute to the national well-being.

I have had conversations with some of Canada's labour leaders and look forward to meeting with them in the new year. Every independent analysis indicates the FTA will create thousands of new jobs across every region of Canada, particularly in the most disadvantaged regions, if I am not mistaken.

But there will be some dislocation and change and governments must be ready to accommodate this reality in an innovative and productive way.

[*English*]

In general, properly handled and sensitively dealt with adjustment is a positive process indicative of a workforce that is responsive to change, seeking a better life for themselves and their children. We already have one of the most highly skilled and highly mobile forces in the world. Some four million Canadians change jobs every year. They move up. They move ahead. They move on. New and better jobs are created when positive adjustment takes place.

For those of us who represent far flung regions of Canada—and I see Members from Newfoundland, British Columbia and north-eastern Quebec, for example, in the House—as a result of new industries and new jobs created in the regions of Canada, thousands of our young people will be able to work at home rather than moving to other provinces in search of work. When we have created jobs in regions in those areas far removed from central Canada, we will have done the country a service because we will have strengthened the nation by bringing prosperity to the outer regions of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: Over the next 10 years not all adjustments in the economy by any means will result from implementation of the Free Trade Agreement. It is quite to the contrary. Adjustment is going to come to this House, to all its Members and to all of us from technology, from changing tastes, from changing demands, from changing international competition and from changing policies here and around the world. The agreement was designed to accommodate some of these fundamental realities and fundamental Canadian interests and special adjustment problems.

• (1740)

Some industries, such as cultural industries and transportation, were exempted entirely. In other sectors, all current practices were grandfathered, such as the beer industry and all the service industries. Marketing boards for our dairy and our poultry producers are fully preserved, and special safeguard provisions were made for our horticultural industry.

Perhaps most important, the agreement provides for a phasing-in period of 10 years, precisely to allow time for industries to adapt and adjust; a decade, a 10-year period for labour and management and Governments of all stripes to work together to prepare not only for the changes but for the tremendous opportunities economically that can come to Canada and to all our regions.

Through our comprehensive consultations program with industry, throughout the negotiations, representatives of each sector in effect chose voluntarily the pace at which they could live with tariff reductions.

[*Translation*]

However, Mr. Speaker, should even the measured phasing-in of the FTA prove too difficult for some industries, its safeguard provisions allow either government to re-impose the tariff on a temporary basis. More generally, the federal and provincial governments have a variety of programs in place to ease adjustment for individuals, for companies and for communities—such as unemployment insurance and re-training and relocation programs, and so on.

In addition, The de Grandpré Commission will identify what more is needed specifically to meet the adjustment challenge of the FTA. Its primary focus is to look at the need for more people-oriented programs, training and education programs intended to ensure that Canadians have the skills necessary to compete, to produce and to excel.