

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

During the election campaign, I travelled approximately 20,000 miles, give or take a couple of hundred miles.

Nunatsiaq, which means the beautiful land, is not, contrary to popular belief, bleak and barren. Its scenery can compete with any world tourist attraction. If you do not believe me, Madam Chairman, I invite you to come up to Auyuittuq National Park and Pangnirtung, the Kazan Falls at Baker Lake, or to canoe down the Coppermine River.

Northerners do not want hand-outs from the Government. All we want is a chance to compete with southern businesses in our territory and to become self-sufficient.

The Government must understand that the North is very wary of the Free Trade Agreement. We are worried that we will not be able to compete with American firms which, because of their size, can undercut us, and certain tenders that are over \$33,000 will be fair game for the Americans.

The economic future of the Northwest Territories should not be approached by focusing on the problems of the area: long distances, harsh climate, limited services and a small population base. The Northwest Territories should not be considered a burden on the rest of Canada.

We in the North focus on the opportunities and the potential of our area, emphasizing the wealth of resources, the beauty of the land and our strategic position in Canada's claim to Arctic sovereignty. We encourage the Government to take the same approach. The Northwest Territories is an asset to Canada, economically, socially and politically. We can make a great contribution to the prosperity of this nation if Canada will invest in us.

Development of policies which address changes in regulatory regimes, tax structures, fiscal policy, grant programs and the provision of appropriate supportive infrastructure will go a long way toward ensuring prosperity for the Northwest Territories and hence for Canada. The North must have access to programs and policies similar to the ones used in the initial development of our provinces. We require incentives, subsidies and rebates that will put us on an equal footing with the rest of Canada.

This requires substantial input, but this must be viewed as an investment, whether it is promoting tax measures and reward incentives, developing a resource base of qualified northerners to satisfy the workforce requirements of our expanding northern economy,

encouraging northern participation in the non-renewable resource base industry via publicly traded companies, or exploring linkages between the mining industries and other industries such as tourism and arts and crafts. (English translation from Inuktitut:)

In the area of tourism, more work should be done in education and training, and this should be public sector driven. In the area of transportation, we need an improved and expanded road system and our airport facilities need to be upgraded.

• (1550)

We need to equalize costs with southern markets for transportation, communications, wages, housing and CMHC mortgages. We have to resolve the ownership of land, streamline and consolidate existing government programs and develop a one-window approach.

The people of Nunatsiaq have a very high unemployment rate. Seal hunting and carving are used to supplement incomes. However, we all know what happened to the sealskin market because of Greenpeace and Brigitte Bardot. The collapse of this market destroyed the economy of many Inuit communities as well as that of Newfoundland.

Less widely known is the effect of the United States Marine Mammals Protection Act on the northern and native economy. Passed in 1972, this Act prohibits Canadian northern and native people from exporting sealskin, ivory, whalebone or polar bear skins into the United States.

An exemption from this Act should have been obtained by the Canadian Government during the Free Trade Agreement negotiations. Such an exemption would have a very beneficial impact on the northern economy. But the exemption was not achieved and it seems the Government was not willing to pursue it. Was it because the North did not have enough influence or economic muscle that this issue was not pushed harder?

The Inuit will not be any better off with the passage of the free trade legislation. Why is it that the Alaskan Inuit are exempt from this Act but the Canadian Inuit are not? It certainly is not because the seals or walrus are endangered. The quotas for polar bear hunting are strictly enforced. So the polar bear is not endangered in the world. What is it that the Government is going to do to help Inuit who rely on hunting to sustain themselves? I am certain that the Government of Canada would want to see the Inuit self-sufficient and not totally