

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

improved our opportunities to sell into the U.S. market with this agreement.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tom Wappel (Scarborough West): Madam Speaker, it is with a sense of pride, coupled with humility, that I rise to address this House for the first time. I am deeply thankful to the people of Scarborough West for having considered me worthy of their trust and confidence. Indeed, for me it is quite literally the fulfilment of a life-long dream.

• (1920)

Scarborough West is one of the five federal ridings comprising the City of Scarborough in the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto. In my view, it is a classic microcosm of urban Canada, containing upwardly mobile professionals, blue collar workers, many generation Canadians, immigrants, low income families and a large population of senior citizens.

During the election campaign, as I am sure most if not all Members did, I spoke with many thousands of people, although, with a population of over 90,000, it was unfortunately not possible to meet with all. I promised the people of Scarborough West that, if elected, I would represent them forcefully and with honesty and integrity.

The people of Scarborough West know that I hold strong convictions on most issues which affect us all and that they can count on me to make those convictions known in the House.

One of those issues about which I hold a strong conviction is this trade agreement, not free trade as a concept but this Free Trade Agreement.

Mr. Gustafson: Be sure now.

Mr. Wappel: I am 100 per cent sure. During my quest for my nomination and during the election campaign, I made it crystal clear that I am opposed to this agreement. I do not oppose it for partisan reasons. Rather, I believe it is fundamentally a bad agreement. Why? Because the foundation of it is anchored in weakness, and thus, if the foundation is weak, the agreement built on it is fragile at best.

As a new Member, I listened carefully to the proceedings in this Chamber last week. However, I did not partake in the procedural debates which I felt were a waste of the time and the money of the Canadian people, a waste forced on us by the arrogance of a

Conservative Government which, heady with an election victory, refuses to acknowledge the great schism in Canada between those in favour of this agreement and those opposed or unsure. This arrogance caused the procedural wrangling which has been perpetuated by the petulance of the Members of the NDP.

To return to the weak foundation of this agreement, I want to point out to Hon. Members the three weaknesses upon which I believe this agreement is founded. First, the Government which negotiated this agreement is led by a Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) who, while campaigning for his Party's leadership, was an outspoken opponent of free trade with the United States.

He has never explained to Canadians why he did a complete about face. Was he forced to change by big business and some of his colleagues, almost pushed into the deal? It appears so to me, since he never told any of us why he changed. What kind of commitment from the top is that to this agreement?

Second, it is a cardinal rule of negotiation technique that one outlines the objectives to be obtained and makes no concessions unless those concessions are returned with the ultimate goal of obtaining the objectives.

The Conservative Government had two very clear and public objectives: first, to obtain an exemption from United States protectionist law; and, second, to obtain a binding dispute settlement mechanism included in the agreement.

The negotiations failed on both these counts. We did not get an exemption from American trade law, and the so-called binding dispute resolution mechanism is a toothless tiger. It is a mechanism without prescribed remedies in the event of default.

Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition, of which I am a part, has tried to move that the agreement be amended to rectify this latter situation by adding to Bill C-2, immediately after line 29 on page 36 thereof, the following:

Notwithstanding any provision of this Act or the agreement, Canada may refer a bilateral trade dispute with the United States arising out of the implementation of the agreement to the dispute settlement mechanism of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to which Canada and the United States are a party.

Under the present interpretation of the agreement, Canada is not allowed to have trade disputes ruled on by the GATT. Article 1801 proposes that this agreement will deal exclusively with U.S. trade laws, laws which