

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Mr. Harb: Canadians firms will also migrate to the other side of our southern border. They will have to. The advantage that the United States has over Canada compels companies to do just that.

Mr. McDermid: Why?

Mr. Harb: Lower labour costs, longer growing seasons and a market 10 times the size of ours are advantages that any firm anxious about its bottom line cannot ignore.

Mr. McDermid: Why haven't they done it before?

Mr. Harb: These obvious results of the legislation concern me as they concern millions of Canadians. Issues such as this trade deal force us to take long hard looks at what it means to be Canadian. We are proud of our country, and we should be. We are proud of the compassionate quality of our social and regional programs. We are proud of having a political system which allows our government to be a catalyst, stepping in to encourage and support those individuals who need help most. We are a nation with a heart.

Liberal governments have played a major role creating and maintaining a system which protects the rights and interests of all Canadians. I am worried about the fact that we are giving the Americans national treatment in our goods, our services and our investments. No other Government has ever negotiated free trade in services. We know why, Mr. Speaker. Because it will have a devastating effect on those Canadians in the service industry. This is a vulnerable group which includes a high proportion of women and new Canadians. Yes, we are worried.

We must recognize that the Government's majority means that this deal will be approved despite our opposition. But that does not mean the work is over. The Government faces an incredible challenge, a challenge that it must meet if it is truly representative and responsible to the people of this country. It is the challenge of this Government and future Governments to ensure full and secure access to the American market, a goal that our friends on the other side of the House went into negotiations to obtain and emerged without. This Government must ensure the protection of our social and regional development programs.

It is the challenge of this Government to provide our industries with the tools necessary to adjust to the new economic realities created by the Free Trade Agreement. This Government and future Governments must ensure that our birthright, and the birthright of our

children and our children's children, the energy and natural resources which make our country great, are not given away at the cost of our future.

Our day-to-day lives once this deal is implemented will be changed. I am concerned that we will not be prepared for this change. Our farmers, our fishing industry, the millions of Canadians employed in the service sector and the textile industry—the hit list goes on and on. To compete in a free trade environment is a difficult task for a country one-tenth the population and the economic base of its partner. It is especially difficult for Canada because of the fundamental flaws contained within this particular deal. To be competitive, it is vital that we begin with a well trained and productive workforce. Production is a function of efficiency. Efficiency is a function of knowledge and knowledge, logically, is a function of education.

[*Translation*]

As Canadians, we are intelligent, creative and dynamic. The list of Canadian contributors to research and development is very long.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, we have heard a lot about the exodus to the South of our best experts in technology. We have to stop that brain drain which threatens the excellence we have maintained as our objective at the university level as well as in our research and technology institutes. We also have to create an environment that encourages innovation and creativity. That's what we want for our country.

[*English*]

To this end the Government must set up a national strategy on educational retraining. As a Canadian, Mr. Speaker, I feel it is a tragedy that in an advanced and industrial society as ours there are over five million people who are functionally illiterate. That has to change, and it is going to change. Our future as a nation depends on it.

Canadians have worked hard to achieve the economic and political standing we now enjoy in the international arena. The Government owes it to Canadians to ensure that this standing is not weakened as a result of the trade deal. The Government must not contribute to the polarization of the western world economy.

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There is a great deal of work ahead. I want the Government to face up to its responsibilities now and deal with the problems that this trade deal will create. There is too much at stake to do otherwise. This is a