

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

is a constituency of entrepreneurs, owners, and operators of small business, people who create jobs and who lead others to create jobs with them. Mine is a constituency of people who serve through the Government, through the utilities, and through the service sector in a vibrant capital city. These are the people to whom free trade matters. These are the people who said to me: "Go to Ottawa and speak on our behalf for free trade".

Many in the district of St. John's East continue to struggle with unemployment, continue to struggle to create the opportunities that they need for work, to be able to live in Newfoundland with their families. I mention particularly the people of Bell Island where, 25 years ago, the iron ore mines were closed. Since then they have struggled with minor success to find the real opportunity which will provide them with the employment that is so important to them.

Mine is a district of communities faced by the tremendous burden of debt but also challenged by the increasing cost to provide the very basic services that the residents demand.

Despite hardship and adversity, the constituents of St. John's East are focused on the future. The constituents of St. John's East are most concerned about the opportunities that will give the jobs that they need. They are most concerned about the opportunities that are provided under the Free Trade Agreement.

We have a growing but small high-tech industry, a high-tech industry that knows the opportunities provided by free trade.

In the district of St. John's East and in the City of St. John's we have three post-secondary education institutions. Memorial University and the Marine Institute are world-class centres for research, centres that focus on the opportunities provided by the sea, the sea that we have lived by and from for so many years. We also continue to await the benefits of the offshore oil and gas resources below our shores.

Those are the opportunities that face us in the future, but we have had a history of ups and downs in the economy of Newfoundland and Labrador—minor successes and major failures. What we as Newfoundlanders have always asked, the only thing that we have demanded, is for the opportunity to create for ourselves, our families, and our communities the opportunities that will allow us to build a better tomorrow so that we can live and work in our homes, the opportunity that we have not been provided in the past.

My hon. friend talked earlier about what we as Newfoundlanders want as the ability to control our own destiny, but without the opportunities to do that we have not the chance. He talked of ships of state and charting our own course. What we have with the Free Trade Agreement, what we have with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, what we have with the Hibernia understanding is the ship that he wants to get into and chart his own course. Without those opportunities there is no ship. The Free Trade Agreement is a part of an attempt for the first time to develop an economic program that allows Atlantic Canadians generally, and Newfoundlanders in particular, to make decisions for themselves, to create the opportunities for themselves, to say that we can and will have the tools that we need in our hands to do exactly that.

Too long we have been forced to take what we can get. We have been forced to have our resources exported from our shores with the minimum of production, with the minimum of value added to them. Too long we have been exporting cod blocks and frozen fillets. But why? Because of tariffs. We have been unable to get to our natural market in the United States, except with the barest of resources, because of the burden of tariffs. If we want to take a piece of fish and for some unknown reason we want to add a few corn flakes to it, or we want to put a little cheese on it—I cannot imagine why we would but people in this part of the world like to do that—we could not do that because there is a tariff on it. Our exports are of raw product, fine, there is no tariff on it. But on anything else there is a tariff. We are in an immediate disadvantage.

With the Free Trade Agreement that burden is removed. The same applies to our forest industries. The same applies to our minerals. Instead of exporting the bare bones, now, with the tariffs gone under this agreement, we have the ability to create the jobs in Newfoundland and in the Atlantic Provinces so that it is our people who are putting bread crumbs on fish and not people in Massachusetts who are putting bread crumbs on fish. It is our people who are taking wood products from wood and turning them into windows and doors, not people in the United States.

Those are the opportunities of free trade. Those are the things that will be our future. Those are the things that we have wanted for so long, that chance to create the jobs and the opportunities for ourselves.

I would like to talk briefly about social programs. Medicare will not be threatened by this deal. Pensions will not be threatened by this deal. Unemployment