

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Over-all, we lose under this agreement. We give up our resources and our control of public services, but we do not even get guaranteed access to the American market in exchange. The Free Trade Agreement in no way prevents the United States from continuing to apply countervailing duties, as it did in the softwood lumber case. The dispute settlement process must apply the trade law of the country concerned in resolving disputes. We get no protection from that under the trade agreement.

Set in its broad context, the Free Trade Agreement forms part of an over-all strategy of Canadian big business to roll back the gains in public ownership. We have given up an enormous amount. Canadians voted against this deal on November 21. The constituents of Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing voted against this deal on November 21.

I hope I have given some indications as to the reasons why they voted against it and why they did not accept the vision of Canada the Government presented.

It is an unfortunate and sorry day for Canada when we give up so much for so little.

• (2100)

[Translation]

The Deputy Chairman: The Hon. Member for Richelieu (Mr. Plamondon).

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Plamondon: Mr. Chairman, this is the first time I am greeted with such applause by the Opposition. They must have the wrong list.

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to take part in the discussion of clause 2 of the free trade legislation. It is indeed a pleasure, because this is one of this Government's best achievements, certainly an achievement that will bear fruit for the coming generation and all those after that.

But before getting into the heart of the matter, that is clause 2, I would like to take this opportunity to hail my constituents who re-elected me with a 23,000 vote majority. This was a clear approval, by 69 per cent of the popular vote, of this Government's policies and the performance of their Member of Parliament. I am deeply touched by that vote of appreciation, which I view as a heavy responsibility for the Government and for myself to pursue in the same direction. I therefore hail all the areas in my constituency, starting from the beautiful community of Bécancour which over these last

four years has enjoyed enormous levels of investment, because Bécancour, which has the largest industrial park in Quebec, had always been the center of federal-provincial bickering at the official level, but has now enjoyed a climate of co-operation over the last four years, which resulted in the location of five major industries in Bécancour's park since then. For instance, Norsk Hydro will soon hire 350 employees, the aluminum recycling company soon to be joined by a magnesium recycling company.

Finally, this park is doing better and better thanks to this Government's drive and especially its policies, either in the area of Nicolet which also has enjoyed heavy investment, mainly the \$1,200,000 Museum of Religions, as well as the whole area of Saint-Célestin, Anneville, Sainte-Monique, Grand-Saint-Esprit, a part of our country which often had felt neglected by the previous Government and has been in full economic swing for four years now. So the people in that area, people in the Baie Dufebvre area which are the biggest dairy producers in the country, were not afraid of free trade—they did not believe the lies, and the false rumors the Liberal Party tried to spread in the constituency of Richelieu through the efforts of their candidate.

Ours is a proud region, and I enjoyed telling the story of Baie Dufebvre's farmer, a good Conservative, who was told by his neighbor, a Liberal farmer who, having been used to years of arrogance was always boasting of having the best performance: You know, in the morning I get aboard my jeep, and when the day ends I have not seen the end of my farm. To which our good Conservative friend replied: I also have a jeep like yours. This shows that the era of arrogance is over in that region, the fear Liberals tried to instill into the people during the election campaign is over.

This is also true of the area of Pierreville—the Pierre Thibault company which makes fire trucks, is banking enormously on free trade to increase its work force and of course its list of customers—all because of higher productivity that free trade would bring about. The regions of Yamaska and Saint-David and the communities in and around the Sorel-Tracy region, namely Saint-Robert, Saint-Aimé, Sainte-Victoire and Saint-Ours, will benefit greatly from free trade. My constituency, Sorel-Tracy, in particular, stands to gain considerably. Companies like Atlas Steel and Slater Steel, which buy much of their raw material on U.S. markets, will gain guaranteed access to those markets over the course of the next ten years and see the rates drop from ten to two to one per cent annually during that time.