

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

economic constitution for North America and that this is the first step in binding our nations together.

I am a democrat. I believe in democratic institutions and I believe in democracy. If we put in place an economic union agreement between Canada and the United States, it is as sure as night follows day that in time, the people who live in this part of North America will say that if decisions will be made that affect their lives, they want to vote for the people who make those decisions. In this agreement, the decisions being made that will affect Canada in future will be made in Washington.

Mr. McDermid: What a crock.

Mr. Tobin: That is not a crock, my friend. It may be enough for the Tory mentality to sell your soul, your sovereignty, your right to set your own course and your right to captain your own ship to the United States, but it is not enough for a democrat. It is not enough for someone who believes in democratic institutions or for someone who believes in Canada and in the right of self-determination.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Tobin: There is a philosophy opposite that is so driven and blinded by the notion of the market-place and the free movement of capital, no matter for what purpose, that it sees the northern half of this continent, that part we call Canada and that part that is a reflection of the collective wisdom, blood, sweat, tears and history of Canada, that sense of Canadian sovereignty, that fabric that has been woven together into the country we call Canada, as nothing more than an irritant to free market forces. Suddenly we have an agreement that sets up, from the point of view of those who are the biggest players in the North American market-place, those who occupy the boardrooms in the glass, steel and concrete towers of the major financial centres south of the border, something called free trade.

There is no free trade here. What we have is economic union, a sell-out of Canada.

What does Clause 6, the clause we want deleted, do? Clause 6 provides that the treaty we have signed with the United States, forever and a day, will take precedence over any act of a provincial legislature anywhere in Canada.

Mr. McDermid: No, that's wrong.

Mr. Tobin: No provincial Government in Canada will ever again be able to take measures within its own jurisdiction and within its own right as defined under the British North America Act, the Constitution of Canada, to set priorities, policies or programs for that province if, in any way, shape or form, Washington determines that the programs are inconsistent with the treaty signed between the United States and the Government of Canada.

Mr. McDermid: That's a lie.

Mr. Tobin: That isn't a lie, that's the truth. Obviously it bites right to the Hon. Member's marrow.

As I stand here in the Parliament of Canada, that Chamber that represents the voice and the views of all of the people of Canada who are concerned about the national interest and not just the narrow interests of any one of our constituencies, I find it passing strange that all those great champions of provincial rights, those Premiers who have talked so often about the rights of provinces to independence, about this being a Confederation, an association of various jurisdictions, have been muted. The Premier of Newfoundland, Mr. Brian Peckford, the fighting Newfoundlander, has found himself muted and swallowed up under the weight of the patronage and pork-barrelling tactics of the Hon. Member for St. John's West. His nose is so deep in the spout that he cannot see that the fundamental interests of Newfoundland, the newest Province of Canada, the proudest Province of Canada, are being sold out by a piece of legislation and by a Government that would sacrifice nationhood on the altar of unbridled capitalism. This Bill is a shame.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, much has been said tonight about the origins of the free trade agreement. Quite rightly, the Hon. Member for Skeena (Mr. Fulton) pointed out the biographical detail that a great many Canadians perhaps do not know but that is pertinent to the Minister for International Trade (Mr. Crosbie). He pointed out the fact that the Minister and his family, going all the way back to 1949, have sought to become a part of the United States. Our only wish is that the Crosbie family would have found a way to become a part of the United States without taking the rest of Canada with them.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Blaikie: Perhaps it has something to do with the rather selective nature of American immigration laws that the Minister for International Trade has never been admitted to what he obviously regards as the promised land.

The Hon. Member also spoke of the origins of the clauses in the agreement which have to do with what the Hon. Member said were the secret underpinnings of the agreement. That, of course, is the whole question of Canadian water, something which the trade negotiator, Mr. Reisman himself, referred to once as Canada's ace in the hole with respect to any agreement with the United States of the sort that he then went on to negotiate. It would be a mistake to imagine that Mr. Reisman either exists now or existed then in a political vacuum.

The fact is, and this is something that some Liberals may find uncomfortable, that the Grand Canal project has its origins amidst a group of very high-powered Liberals in Canada. I speak, for example, of the Desmarais brothers. I know that when Lou Desmarais was a Member of Parliament prior to the election of 1984 he actively lobbied Members of