

Mr. Broadbent was un-repentant when he was confronted by the fact that the quote he used to support his assertion was eight years old and the person who said it now says that he no longer holds those views.

But, Mr. Broadbent made the point he wanted: Canadians must fear that more open competition under Free Trade will drag us down to the level of some reactionary backwater in the United States. Yet, where is the proof of this? All the evidence is to the contrary.

For more than 50 years Canada has been reducing trade barriers and creating more open competition with the United States. Have we been driven backwards in our health care, in pensions for the elderly, in our assistance to the unemployed? No, we have not.

As trade barriers have come down...an 80% reduction in tariffs since World War II...trade with the U.S. has burgeoned, our economy has grown immensely and Canadians have had the wealth that is necessary to create and sustain an impressive range of social programs.

Wealth is one ingredient...and Canadians will have more of it under Free Trade...but national will is the other vital ingredient to build and maintain social programs. Canadians have decided they want a fairer, more caring society and they have decided that social programs are critical to achieving that. That vital ingredient is so deeply and so broadly held in our society that nothing will shake it...least of all a Free Trade Agreement that has nothing to do with Canada's social programs.

I want to put an end to the false charge that social programs are threatened by Free Trade. I want to debate the issues honestly and vigorously. I want Canadians to decide not based on lurking fears, but on a clear understanding of the facts. That is how great national issues deserve to be decided.