

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

[Translation]

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, the Prime Minister should admit that this Agreement goes well beyond trade. The whole agreement is based on a concept called national treatment. Section 105 of this agreement is quite clear. Canada will have to give the United States national treatment in investment and in goods and services.

The Agreement does affect our social programs, despite the Prime Minister's statements. It also affects our regional development programs, our agricultural support programs. During the next round of negotiations that will take from five to seven years, both parties will try to find a common definition of subsidy. That is where all our programs will be harmonized with those of the United States.

That is why we must ask ourselves whether Canadians want to harmonize our minimum wage with Wyoming's, which is \$1.60 an hour. Do Canadians want to harmonize our unemployment insurance programs with the United States, where only a quarter of the unemployed are covered, at a rate that is only a fraction of the Canadian rate? Do Canadians want to harmonize our maternity leave with a country that has no equivalent program? In the United States, only about 40 per cent of women receive maternity benefits, and in most cases for less than six weeks.

Do we really want to harmonize our health insurance plan with a country where one quarter of women of child-bearing age have no medical insurance? Do we really want to harmonize with a country where 37 million Americans have absolutely no medical insurance? A country where the federal medicare program is not accessible for more than half the people living below the poverty line? A country where a serious illness can easily bankrupt you?

Personally, I prefer to live in a country where they do not check your credit card before they check your pulse when you have to go to hospital.

[English]

This agreement talks about the free flow of market forces. I believe in the market system, in competition, in private enterprise and in rewarding success. However, I have to remind the House and through you, Mr. Speaker, Canadians from coast to coast that, historically, Canada was not built on free market forces. This country became a nation in 1867. Negotiations began in 1864, because it wanted to resist the continental pressures of the United States. This country deliberately built itself east and west and then north to resist those continental pressures. We built a railway which brought British Columbia into Confederation in 1871. We persuaded Prince Edward Island to join this Confederation in 1873 with a direct guarantee for communication and transport. The Terms of Union in 1949, persuaded Newfoundland to come in under the same guarantees.

We built a railway. We built a national highway. We established a national broadcasting system. We established

and built a national pipeline and a national airline—all to build an infrastructure that would hold a relatively small population together in a massive land mass. We deliberately resisted the market forces of the United States.

Free market forces alone would not have given us public housing, or a public transportation network, or the best medical care system in the world, the Canadian Wheat Board, or a very comprehensive support system for the weaker elements in Canadian society. What I am saying is not anti-American; it is pro-Canadian. The Americans have always been our closest friends and our closest allies, as well as our best trading partner. That will not change whether this deal goes through or not. That certainly will not change when a Liberal Government returns to Ottawa.

We heard this afternoon from the Prime Minister that those of us who do not support his deal are timid and afraid. We are accused of having no confidence in Canada's future. But who really are the frightened ones? Who are the ones rushing into this trade deal with the United States looking for Big Brother? Who were the frightened ones afraid of putting this deal to the test of the Canadian people? This is a deal that they tried to keep secret. They tried to hide it from Canadians for more than 1,000 days of secret negotiations.

It is the members of the Government who were afraid. They are wrong about this trade deal. They are wrong about this country. They are certainly wrong about this Party. We do have confidence in Canada. We do have confidence in our future. The difference is that our future is not a continental future; our future is a Canadian future with wide international aspects.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Our Canada has horizons which go far beyond those envisaged in the Conservative trade deal. There is a better way. We reject this deal because it turns us into little more than a colony of the United States and, on the international scene, into merely a junior partner.

I want to refer to a document produced by my colleague from Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) who pointed out in his report, *Expanding Choices*, that we are offering Canadians a better choice. I am sure you, Mr. Speaker, would allow me, and the House would allow me in a parenthetical but in a very sincere way, to say to my colleague from Winnipeg—Fort Garry how much the House, how much the Opposition, appreciates the way he has worked against great odds in this House and in the committee through the heat of the summer. The results have been borne out in his analysis of this deal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): I also want to thank the other member of the committee from our Party, the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand), for his incessant work in the analysis of this deal which will mean so much negatively, I believe, for our country.