

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

these issues not only between Canada and the United States under the Free Trade Agreement, but whenever progress can be made and wherever Canadian interests can be advanced.

Earlier this month in Montreal, GATT ministers reviewed progress in tackling these questions on a multilateral basis. I think all Canadians had an upfront view of just how difficult it will be on some of these complex issues to reach a broad consensus.

• (1730)

Progress in the GATT is often limited. It is always painfully slow. Sometimes, on some important issues, years go by without the slightest movement.

We have too many millions of jobs. We have too many young people crying out for economic opportunities. Unemployment is too high in places such as Newfoundland, Labrador and British Columbia. People want economic opportunity. They cannot wait year after year. They are saying yes to the kind of dynamism that comes from a bilateral trading agreement with our largest trading partner.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: That is all the more reason to draw some satisfaction from the results negotiated bilaterally by Canada and the United States. For Canada the issue of subsidies is of critical importance in both our bilateral and multilateral trading agendas. We are particularly concerned about subsidies that distort trade in agriculture. We are also pressing for greater clarity and consistency in the use of countervailing duties in free trade.

What will not be discussed in any forum is Canadian social programs. They are simply not part of the agenda. Programs such as medicare or pensions are not at risk, never have been—nor will they ever be jeopardized in any future negotiations. One of the most unfair events that ever transpired in this election campaign, or in any other, was the suggestion that some elderly person who is helpless or sick might lose her pension by voting a given way when everybody knows that Canadian social programs never were on the table, and never will be. The only thing that will happen is that they will be better as a result of the wealth that will come from more trade in Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: When the elderly receive their cheques in January, February, March, June and July, and those pension cheques are going up, and when they go to the hospital and the state continues to pay 100 per cent of the freight, they are going to say after a period of time: "What were the Liberals and the NDP telling us? Why were they telling us this?" To their shame and eternal regret Canadians will remember what was said. They will penalize those who tried to abuse their trust and their confidence.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: The Member from Winnipeg said today in his speech that he had a tough time even though we had received by far the largest number of seats. He said that he had a tough time accepting the verdict, that he was not sure what Canadians meant. As Canadians watch these events unfold they will teach the Hon. Member from Winnipeg what democracy really means, if they have to give it to him time and time again until he gets it straight. When one wins an election, one has won and one has the confidence of the people to proceed with the mandate.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. Mulroney: Mr. Speaker, the election of November 21 was a ringing vote of confidence by Canadians in themselves. They voted for the future rather than the past. They chose to take up the challenge of competitive excellence. They have answered a clarion call to build a stronger nation in a new decade and a new century.

Canadians want to look forward and outward. This Government is doing that. The Canada-United States Free Trade Agreement does that. But economic renewal is not the sole responsibility of the Canadian Government. It is the joint responsibility of government, business and labour. It requires cooperation and consultation, and is very seldom successful when there is confrontation.

The challenge to government is to create a climate conducive to success. The challenge to business is to seize new opportunities. The challenge to labour, with its ideas and its leadership, is to help make it work.

If all three pull together, all Canadians will benefit as new and better jobs are created and a deeper pool of natural and national wealth results for Canada.

All experts say that over the next 10 years the Free Trade Agreement will create about 250,000 new jobs.