

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

This is the same Government that told us that it would get a deal that would guarantee Canadians full access to the U.S. markets, a deal that would exempt our exporters from harassment under U.S. trade remedy laws, a deal that would protect our regional development programs.

How can we possibly trust this Government to negotiate for our country over the next five to seven years in respect of those matters that remain outstanding? The record is clear. What was promised is not what this Government got in this deal.

We know that the Americans are already starting to clamour for the dismantling of our regional development programs, as well as some specific programs in our forestry and our fishing industries. Indeed, the Americans have already said that some of our Government's investments in silviculture and reforestation constitute an unfair subsidy and should be countervailable. That is what they have said.

I have in my hand, Mr. Speaker, a document from the United States Department of Commerce, and it lists such things as the Economic and Regional Development Program, ERDAs—and they are not icing on the cake in Atlantic Canada. That money goes to pay for the flour that bakes the cake in Atlantic Canada. It is an important regional development tool.

Also listed is the IRDP, the Industrial Regional Development Program, a tool of nation building that was first put into place by a Liberal Government. Also listed is the Fishing Vessel Assistance Program—and I do not think there is one Member in this House representing a riding in which the fishery plays an important role who would say that the Fishing Vessel Assistance Program constitutes an unfair subsidy and should be countervailable in the U.S.

These are the types of programs that the U.S. Department of Commerce wants eliminated, and it is these very programs that will be on the table over the next five to seven years. I submit, Mr. Speaker, that these programs do not constitute subsidies; rather, they are tools of regional development, tools that we have used for years in this country to redistribute wealth and create economic opportunity and fairness across this nation.

I submit that the trade deal, if brought into force and effect, will lead to the systematic dismantling of the regional development programs in this country, thus ensuring that Atlantic Canada will never become a full partner in the economic development of this nation.

• (1500)

Simply put, we in Atlantic Canada cannot support an agreement that does not fully protect these vital programs. Already we have seen this Tory Government slash its deficit on the backs of the poorer regions. In his first two Budgets, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) cut over \$1.5 billion from the regional development envelope. That is on the record. Atlantic Canada should shudder when the Conservative Government makes a commitment to maintaining these programs because its record speaks otherwise.

Time and time again Ministers opposite have shown a complete lack of knowledge of Atlantic Canada and its legitimate concerns about the impact of this trade deal. We recall the former Minister of State for International Trade, the former Member from Sault Ste. Marie who, when asked about the impact of the free trade deal on the textile industry in Nova Scotia said: "Nova Scotia shouldn't worry because it doesn't have a textile industry". This came as quite a surprise, not only to the Stanfields, a name that should be well known in the Conservative Party, but also to the hundreds of workers in Nova Scotia who are employed in the textile industry.

Perhaps the former Minister was shedding a little light on what would happen once the deal comes into force. I think he was right. Under the deal Nova Scotia will not have to worry about asking questions like that because it may not have a textile industry five years down the road. During the election he was asked about a statement made by Tom Stanfield, who said that his company would survive free trade, but it may mean that they would have to relocate their operations to the U.S.

When the Minister of Finance was travelling through Nova Scotia telling people they had to vote for the deal or they would lose thousands of jobs, he was the expert on everything dealing with free trade, and he was asked to comment on Tom Stanfield's statement, he said: "I am not an expert on textiles. Don't ask me about that". That was the same Minister who said in this House that we are not to worry, that he and his Government will protect our regional development programs. However, we saw his attack on the pensions of senior citizens after the 1984 election. After all, those pensions were supposed to be the sacred trust of the Prime Minister. I think we in Atlantic Canada have a right to be very concerned over the Minister of Finance and his commitment to protect these programs over the next five to seven years of negotiations.