

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

Canadian standards being replaced by lower and less desirable American standards, to the detriment of Canadian consumers, Canadian producers and our rural communities.

In summary, this agreement is a dangerous agreement for Canadians because of what it does to our import barriers. No one will be able to persuade the Americans that our marketing boards and our Wheat Board are not barriers to trade. Yet the Government is prepared to sacrifice western agriculture to its ideological agenda.

I want to talk briefly about health and social programs. We have heard a lot about how our health and social programs are protected under this deal. All members of the House know the social and health programs which Canadians enjoy were developed first by CCFers and New Democrats in Saskatchewan. Those Saskatchewan New Democrats fought for these programs and some of them even lost their lives in that fight. They fought against the same forces that now support the Free Trade Agreement.

Social and health programs have a special place in the hearts and minds of New Democrats in Saskatchewan. It was not Mr. Justice Emmett Hall who developed medicare, it was Tommy Douglas, Woodrow Lloyd and Allan Blakeney. New Democrats and Canadians know that and they are proud of that. If not for these three, Douglas, Lloyd and Blakeney, and those CCFers and New Democrats who supported them in Saskatchewan against all odds, Canada would not have a medicare system today.

Much of what makes Canada distinct as a society and a more caring and compassionate society than the United States, a better society I believe, grew out of the vision and work of the CCF and NDP in Saskatchewan. We will not let this House or Canada forget it.

Our health care systems are in danger under this Free Trade Agreement. The Free Trade Agreement will threaten our health care system and the health of Canadians in three main ways: First, it opens up Canada to the American market-driven, for-profit system of management of health care; second, it places permanent legal and political limits on the future powers of Canadian governments to regulate health care services or establish new publicly funded health services; third, it encourages ongoing political pressure from business on both sides of the border to level the playing field by cutting publicly supported social services, including health care.

In Saskatchewan we have seen first-hand considerable evidence of this strategy already. We have seen considerable evidence of the attack on our health care system with the decisions of an increasingly unpopular Progressive Conservative Government there.

Many articles in the agreement serve to attack our health care program, but I will only mention two. Article 2010 sets out the conditions under which either party may establish a monopoly. The definition of a monopoly would include future expansion of Government social services that might replace private services, such as a new dental care program or eye care program. Where the establishment of a monopoly affects American investors, Canada must notify and consult the United States in advance and endeavour to minimize or eliminate any nullification or impairment of benefits under this agreement. If that does not give up something, I do not know what does. If that does not give up the right to ensure that Canadians receive the sort of health care we decide we want, I do not know what does.

According to Article 2011, the nullification and impairment article, almost any present or future Canadian regulation, law, or health care program that had any effect whatsoever on American trade, investment, or profits in health care services, could be challenged by the U.S. Government or American corporations.

According to Article 103, the trade deal is binding on all levels of Canadian Government and essentially constitutes an economic constitutional document. Once in place, it limits the powers of all levels of Canadian Government to carry out action and exercise the powers that they have traditionally enjoyed in the provision of social service programs.

The omission of health and social programs from the Free Trade Agreement does not mean they are secure. All will be vulnerable to attack as unfair subsidies, and subject to countervailing duties or pressure for reduction or elimination.

This risk applies to Canada's health care system, unemployment insurance benefits, Canada Pension, Old Age Security, Family Allowance, equalization payments to poor provinces, subsidies to industries, regional development programs and eventually even perhaps to federally funded day care, none of which exist on the same scale in the United States. All these are subject to serious challenges. All these ensure that Canada gives up a great deal under the agreement.