

But I say in that context that I was shocked that immediately following the election, when the Government was given a very good mandate in our democratic system, and the Prime Minister spoke of reconciliation, that the first act of the Government should be in fact to tear up the rule book of Parliament. That is totally unacceptable. The people of Canada did not vote this Government in to do that.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, we believe that this Agreement will change the very foundation of our country and we are prepared to defend this foundation. Our opposition will always be firm during this session of Parliament and after. We believe that this agreement threatens our future and the future of our children. We believe that this agreement threatens our fundamental values and there are thousands of Canadians who agree with us completely. They are concerned about the possible impact on our social programs. They believe that our environment will be threatened. They believe that our commitment to develop the outlying regions will be threatened. They want measures to protect the workers who will be laid off.

Mr. Speaker, we intend to ensure that their voice is heard here in the House of Commons.

[*English*]

The election illustrated that whether or not Canadians support the trade deal they do care deeply about preserving and enhancing our Canadian social policy tradition from medicare to pensions. They want to maintain the possibility of industrial development in all regions of our country, not just in those regions where the market mechanism happens to be working very well. They want to be certain that Government subsidies can be used to protect our environment and not simply used to develop energy for export to the United States at the same price as Canadians will be paying.

I want to call to the attention, particularly of Members on the other side of the House, what is particularly new and important in this phase of the debate—and I am not going to go over many of the old arguments that have been made and were made prior to the election. It is that there was a new aspect to the debate that occurred during the campaign itself. It was that these messages of concern about social policy, regional development policy and environmental concerns, which will be one of the great ongoing concerns not only in this country but throughout the planet in the next two decades, were raised not simply by Canadians who voted

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

for opposition Parties but also by Canadians who voted for the Government, even if they supported the principles involved. It is possible that their knowledge of the details was shaky, and perhaps it was not. But they differed in judgment. They had concerns about these matters as well.

The Government had an obligation when it came back to the Parliament of Canada not simply to pick up where it left off before the election but to respond in the Throne Speech and in a Bill that it brought before Parliament by indicating that it actually listened to the people of Canada. It did not do so.

Immediately following the election I wrote to the Prime Minister urging that he make his election night call for national reconciliation concrete by reaching out to millions of Canadians who expressed concerns about our future, including both those who voted for and against the Government. They wanted assurances that the trade deal would never be used as a vehicle to compromise these programs that I have said come to constitute the modern Canadian tradition.

I asked for action to ensure that our social policies would be protected. Steps could have been taken before Parliament was called back in terms of reaching a formal agreement and undertaking with the United States to have achieved that goal. I asked for legislation to protect those who would be losing their jobs, and I will return to that in just a few minutes.

I drew attention to the five to seven year period ahead of us as a country when the crucial question of the definition of a subsidy must be determined. I asked for a special parliamentary committee to monitor all aspects of the deal. There is already the equivalent of such a committee established in the United States. I did this because the people of Canada and I want to obtain assurances that over the next few years the activities of the Government, whatever the government of the day, will be monitored by an independent committee made up of government and opposition Members in the House of Commons.

Instead of responding in order to reconcile and to reassure, the Prime Minister ignored the appeal. Instead of listening to Canadians in his hour of victory, he callously dismissed their concerns. Instead of referring to new and relevant resolutions and Bills in an imaginative Throne Speech, the Prime Minister produced simply a rehash of what we dealt with in the previous Parliament.