

Free Trade

Because they are so beneficial.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: An important American Congressman, John LaFalce, who is chairman of an important congressional subcommittee, was more pointed in his assessment. He is not someone who is hostile to Canada. He is not someone who, to the best of my knowledge, has expressed anything other than fairly reasoned judgments on major issues in the past. I do not know him personally but I am acquainted with his record of service in the Congress of the United States. I suppose, like all of us, he is an ordinary Congressman trying to exercise value judgments on important matters that come before the Congress. Clearly his interests are the American interests. My interests are Canadian interests. But take a look at his judgment. He recently stated:

The Canadians were extremely successful in their negotiations on this agreement. The Canadians said we ought not to have provision within the agreement that refers to stabilization of our exchange rates. There are a great many industries which we believe to be primarily commercial that should have been included within the embrace of the agreement.

The Canadians said, these commercial industries are basically cultural industries and "we won't even talk about our cultural industries".

He went on to state, "... and the United States gave in to the Canadians". "The same thing," he said, "is true about the Auto Pact". He concludes by stating:

Most of the members of the United States Congress think that in the free trade agreement the Canadians got a much better deal.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: I, personally, Mr. Speaker, have never put forward that view, for a very good reason. I believe that the only kind of deal that is of any value is a good deal for both sides. For this deal to have any life or any value, like any other mutually beneficial contract, it must be an undertaking that provides benefits for both sides. This is a win-win situation.

No one gets rich on the back of somebody else. We are saying that by liberalizing our trading instruments we will create more wealth—more wealth for the United States, more wealth for Canada. This is genuinely the proven track record of liberalized trade in Europe, now a market of 320 million people which was cringing and crumbling after the war which; with visionary leadership it knocked down trade barriers, got rid of the impediments to trade, and allowed people to compete in a larger market.

This is exactly what we are doing. This is a call to excellence, and we believe that the United States and Canada will emerge with stronger, more powerful economies, providing greater economic opportunities for the young people of both countries.

It is for these reasons that I say as Prime Minister of Canada that I support wholeheartedly this resolution and intend on January 2 to sign this agreement with the United States of America.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: This will represent a major step towards the conclusion, but there will still remain a great deal of time for debate as we move in the new year to put forward the required enabling legislation. We are debating this issue in all parts of the country, and we welcome the response. We are gratified by the growing support from Premiers, the growing support from all regions of the country from Canadians who share the vision of a mature and confident Canada.

[*Translation*]

This is due mainly to the new spirit of tolerance and generosity uniting us all. Canadians have decided to turn their backs on the disagreements and pointless arguments of the past, and face with determination the challenge of the new century ahead. Strengthened by their rediscovered unity, Canadians want to build an even more prosperous country equal to our collective aspirations and our national destiny.

• (1120)

[*English*]

Canada has done very well in this agreement, very well indeed. The agreement has achieved some broad support across the Canadian spectrum. By way of rapid illustration this morning, financial writer, Mr. Belanger, commented that this deal was historic, probably the most important we have ever signed since Confederation. He said, for too long Canada has cut bait. Now is the time for the country to go for it.

Bob Blair from Alberta, one of our most distinguished entrepreneurs and risk-takers, said in our business we would prefer to fight than be protected. We in Alberta are ready to compete with anyone.

[*Translation*]

Robert Campeau, who is one of our greatest Canadian entrepreneurs, said:

[*English*]

Free trade is the most significant economic political act in this century in Canada.

Gordon Cummings talked of the Atlantic possibilities. The Minister of Transport (Mr. Crosbie) raised them this morning and quoted the distinguished Liberal Premier of Nova Scotia. Here is another distinguished Nova Scotian, Gordon Cummings from National Sea Products, who says the most important aspect to us was the dispute settlement mechanism and we got that. It is a hell of a gain for Canada.

[*Translation*]

Philippe de Gaspé Beaubien, president of Télémedia, said that this deal is the key to our future strength and prosperity as a country. Alain Dubuc wrote in *La Presse* that Quebec hit the jackpot with this deal and Mr. Dubuc is right. Quebec hit the jackpot and so has the rest of Canada with this free trade agreement.