

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

[English]

So much for a customs union.

[Translation]

Moreover, this article does not preclude the negotiation of performance requirements attached to subsidies or government procurement.

Madam Speaker, they tend to quote very selectively. And with all due respect for the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce—Lachine East (Mr. Allmand), and in fact I do have a great deal of respect for the Hon. Member because of his many years of experience in the House and because he usually is very accurate when he is quoting . . . Unfortunately, when he quoted section 8, he omitted some vital words. It says, for instance:

That the agreement prevails in the case of inconsistencies in any other Act of Parliament or any regulation . . .

Always within the meaning of section 2 of the *Interpretation Act*.

This particular paragraph bears the heading: "Inconsistent federal laws". Inconsistencies is between federal laws, not . . .

[English]

Supremacy of this law over other laws.

[Translation]

And when he mentions the Charter of Rights, he knows perfectly well, Madam Speaker, that the Charter of Rights prevails over all other laws in Canada as far as rights are concerned. So it is ridiculous to confuse the issue and have us believe that just because there is a section that says there should be no inconsistencies, that this means supremacy. I wanted to say this before explaining why the people in my riding are massively in favour of the free trade agreement, not just the principle, as I said earlier, but the agreement itself.

Rodrigue Tremblay, an economist, expressed it very well in an article in *Le Devoir* on February 24, 1988, when he looked at the concessions made by Canadians and Americans in the free trade agreement. Because that is what an agreement is all about, Madam Speaker! To arrive at an agreement, the two parties involved sit down and decide to examine a problem and to say: We want to arrive at a solution which will be equitable for both of us, a solution that we can live with and that will improve both of our situations. An agreement always entails some measure of compromise. Opponents to free trade have stated repeatedly that the Canadian Government sold off the country to the Americans. Mr. Tremblay quotes those who are against free trade. Several have also said that Canada made too many compromises. But the fact is that Canada made four important concessions to the United States and the United States made four in return. Firstly, Canada will no longer be able to resort to tariffs and quotas to limit the quantity of a product coming into the country and to block American products in Canada. Canada will no longer be able to discriminate between a Canadian-owned company and an American-

owned company. That is what the Member for Yorkton—Melville (Mr. Nystrom) was referring to.

We are talking about discrimination, and not about preventing Canadians from running their own country and adopting the policies they see fit, policies that will further the progress and development of their country. This means that an American company will be subject to the same laws and regulations as Canadian companies, and as our legislation prohibits foreigners from acquiring our industries, this protection will continue to apply. And I have quoted the relevant article. Thus, it is untrue to say that we have a union. It is also false to say that we will no longer be able to protect our industries. Nor are we giving away our resources. That is not in the agreement. It is very clear.

What concessions did the Americans make? Like Canada, they have agreed to relinquish the use of tariffs and quotas. But we must remember one thing, Madam Speaker: There are 25 million of us, and 250 million of them. It follows that that concession was much more consequential for the United States than for Canada.

We will have access to a market that is ten times the size of ours. It is a concession, as Mr. Tremblay said, that is weighted in our favour.

The United States has accepted that complaints of dumping and unfair practices be settled by a group of experts.

That is the key concession. In fact, Madam Speaker, the whole agreement almost foundered on the issue, because the United States is a very powerful country and the Americans are used to having the upper hand, and they were not particularly taken with the idea of an objective tribunal to settle disputes. Several of these controversies were mentioned today, shakes and shingles, for example. Why did we have a problem? Because the United States use their own tribunal to settle these matters and we always lose. So it was absolutely essential for us to have a dispute settlement mechanism and that is what we have. That is another concession that was very important for the United States.

Canada will be excluded from trade disputes that the United States may have with other countries.

That is very clear! So why do people tell us the opposite?

Finally, the United States agreed that some sectors be exempted.

Madam Speaker, "exempted" means "outside of the accord".

a) Cultural industries.

We keep our culture and our sovereignty. For example, films, radio, television, books, the National Film Board, Telefilm, the CBC are all excluded from the agreement.

b) The brewing industry.

This must please many men.

c) Canadian magazines can continue to enjoy postal rates subsidized by the Canadian government.

d) Social programs are protected.