

The Government of Ontario has said that it is in favour of trade liberalization, but that it cannot support this particular agreement.

Its reasons for taking that stand are not particularly clear. For example, the Premier has said that he cannot support the Agreement because Canada was not exempted from U.S. trade laws.

Our objective was to ensure the fair application of trade laws. We sought and we obtained the rule of law in order to replace what was degenerating into the rule of lobbies.

The Agreement establishes binational ways of settling trade disputes. In future, Canadians, as well as Americans, will referee trade disputes with an impartial chairman.

This ensures that Canadian exporters, who play by the rules of the game and who increase their market share in the United States, will be protected from harassment by U.S. competitors.

The Agreement does not guarantee success.

It does not guarantee prosperity.

It does create a rational and fair trading environment in which these goals can be achieved. It will be Canadian entrepreneurs, businesses and risk-takers who will make that Agreement work for Canada.

Critics of the Agreement have been unable to mount any kind of believable attack on the basis of either economic fact or economic theory. Instead, they have engaged in a pitiful display of fear-mongering, saying that we are "selling out the country" or "giving up our sovereignty".

The fact is that none of the elements, essential to our sovereignty, were on the negotiating table. For instance, our cultural industries are specifically exempted from the Free Trade Agreement.

None of our social programs, regional development programs and other policies, which we consider to be vital to our unique identity and our sovereignty, are subject to the Agreement.

Furthermore, if the Free Trade Agreement was such a threat to our social policies and programs, how could we have introduced the National Day Care Program, which has to be one