

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

quotas . . . Now he is leaving—I understand why. It must be embarrassing to do things like that!

We in the Conservative Party said that we like competition and that Canadians can be competitive because Canadians and Quebecers are not afraid. They are eager to do business in the United States. But listening to them, sometimes I look at myself and wonder whether I am really as good as that, because they do not stop defending us by saying that we will be in for trouble and that it will not work. We will come up with a new name for their party. Their party should be called the “Won’t Work” Party. Why try? My friend Jean-Marc Chaput always said so! It won’t work, we’ll stay as we are, say nothing, get hit on the head and say nothing.

But stop saying that it won’t work. It will work, we are already the best. We look at ourselves in the mirror every morning and say, “We Quebecers are not afraid of taking on the United States.” I have been going to the United States for 20 years. I worked in the States, I was a racing car mechanic and we went as fast with 307 engines as the Americans did with 327’s. The Americans would come to see us and ask how we did it. Besides, we did not have money. Well, we tried to get the most out of our production and we did it with our hands and our head. And we told—I know, Madam Speaker, I must conclude—the Americans:

• (1620)

[*English*]

We work harder than you and we try to do better than you because you are very rich and that is the only way in which we can compete, try to get the maximum for our energy.

[*Translation*]

Madam Speaker, I would like the House to do the impossible, to give a chance to the Canadians who elected us so that we can pass this free trade bill. Let the socialists stop frightening people, because they will always drive Ladas and we want to ride in Mercedes. That is the difference.

[*English*]

Mrs. Gaffney: Madam Chairman, I stand here today as one of the newly elected Members of Parliament. It is a great honour and privilege to represent my riding of Nepean in this most prestigious House. I would like to thank those constituents who gave me such a strong mandate, and I hope I can also earn the trust of those who did not.

As an elected member of Nepean City Council and also Ottawa-Carleton Regional Government for the past ten years, one of the things I quickly learned is that the concerns, the thoughts, the wishes of the people are the ones that elected officials should never ignore. Through this, my maiden speech, it is appropriate to take advantage of the time allocated to me to convey the concerns of the constituents of Nepean.

Those constituents who elected me did so for many reasons. Their overwhelming opposition to this trade agreement, however, was far and above the major reason. Time and time again at doors across my riding I heard one thing: “I am against this trade deal as it is written”.

We all know the trade deal will probably pass this House and be ratified. However, I hope that the newly elected Government of Canada is a compassionate Government and will recognize that the agreement is not perfect, it has weaknesses, that loopholes must be plugged, safeguard measures should be implemented, and that this Government has been elected to serve not only those who voted for it but also those who indicated a great deal of trepidation about this agreement.

This debate should not be considered to be a waste of time. Far from it. This debate is as crucial as ever because the debate and the speeches on this side of the House reflect not only our responsibility towards those who elected us, but are a form of notice to the Government that we are watching and we want it to be sensitive.

The mandate I received from the riding of Nepean is all the more remarkable for two reasons. First, because Nepean, or to be more precise the former riding of Nepean—Carleton, is traditionally a Conservative riding. Second, the proponents of the deal have expressed the conception that Nepean is the kind of riding that has the most to benefit from this trade agreement. Yet despite those two facts, the residents of Nepean voted against the Government and against its trade deal.

Why? I believe the overwhelming majority of Nepean residents voted against this deal not because of any particular animosity toward the Government, but because the residents of Nepean—who, by the way, are a most representative group of Canadian constituents—looked at the deal, examined it and the information pertaining to it, and made up their own minds. The residents of Nepean, as did 52 per cent of all Canadians,