

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

The Minister of State for Housing is not listening to grass roots Canadians. He thinks that he knows it all. I invite him to come and visit Parkdale—High Park where people have nowhere to sleep and where six to eight people have to sleep on the floor in one room. I invite the Minister to come and see what the housing crisis is all about and to listen to the grass roots people.

I not only received letters from the riding of Parkdale—High Park. I received letters from across Canada. The following is a letter from Saskatchewan which states:

Dear Mr. Flis,

I am writing as a Canadian citizen, who is extremely concerned that an independent Canada be left for my children and future generations of Canadian children.

I therefore urge you, as an elected member, representing the over 1,200,000 more Canadians who voted against the Free Trade Agreement than voted for it—to be true to your mandate—and fight the F.T.A.

That is someone from Saskatchewan who is asking me to stand here and fight this agreement. Perhaps I am receiving so many letters from Saskatchewan because I was born and raised there. The letter further states:

Canadians elected you, on the promise to fight for our future. Your duty to Canada is to fulfil that promise.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours truly,
Jessie L. Steinhauer-Edwards

I also received a letter from New Westminster, B.C., which was addressed to Jesse Flis, Parkdale—High Park. It states:

The results of the recent federal election clearly demonstrate that a substantial majority of Canadians voted against the Mulroney-Reagan Trade Deal. In fact, only in the provinces of Alberta and Quebec did the Mulroney government receive absolute majorities and, again, not in every riding.

Therefore, we strongly urge you to work to the best of your ability to oppose this deal that the majority of Canadians do not want or in the alternate, based on tactical considerations, fight for effective amendments to lessen its adverse effects on Canadians.

Here is someone from B.C. asking us to fight to bring in amendments, and the Government will not listen. It will not even let us table the amendments. Talk about hijacking Parliament, shame.

Every Prime Minister has a vision of Canada. Unfortunately, the vision of the present Prime Minister is a scary one. He wants to give up what our immigrant parents built for over 100 years. They built this country with their bare hands, and the Government wants to give it away to the United States.

Mr. Mayer: What a bunch of rubbish.

Mr. Flis: In this Parliament we are casting an historic vote on Canada's fate. We are casting a vote to decide whether we want a mosaic Canada like our fathers built or a melting pot Canada. We are to vote on whether we want a Canadian Canada or an American Canada. We are to vote on whether we want a sovereign nation or whether we want to be the fifty-first state of the United States.

Ms. Copps: We choose Canada.

Mr. Boudria: I rise on a point of order, Madam Chairman. I am seeking clarification and assistance from the Chair. I have had the opportunity to review the precedents, and I am unable to find where it has been decided that it was not permitted in any way for Members, either in Committee of the Whole or in the House of Commons, to manifest their approval of another Member's speech by way of applauding on the desks as opposed to with their hands.

Given that this was raised by a Member across the way, and it has been reviewed by yourself, I am seeking assistance from the Chair. Thus far it has been the practice, started by some individual caucuses which for reasons known to themselves would demonstrate their approval in a manner that was changed after television was brought into the House of Commons, but there are no rules preventing or suggesting by which means the applause should be manifested. Perhaps the Chair could enlighten Members on the ruling that was given some time ago.

• (2140)

Mr. Oberle: I will be prepared, Madam Chairman, to allow the Hon. Member, and perhaps the one sitting next to him, special dispensation to thump their desks. It seems to me that it would better reflect the nature of their respective characters.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: The Chair recognizes the Hon. Member for Restigouche.

Mr. Arseneault: Madam Chairman, I do not need special dispensation from the Hon. Member. I can speak for myself. I can only say that the speech was such a great one, I could not restrain my enthusiasm. It is not my fault that those on the opposite side were awakened.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: I should like to respond to the point raised by the Hon. Member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell.