

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Mr. MacKay: What is this nonsense about a mandate? What is needed for a mandate is 50 per cent plus 1.

Did the former great Liberal Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, have a mandate on that basis for the NEP? Did he have a mandate for the patriation of the Constitution? Of course he didn't. He brought those measures forward and we debated them. But, no one ever claimed that he did not have a mandate.

How many Governments in this century have had 50 per cent plus 1 of the popular vote? Very few. Certainly, Pierre Elliott Trudeau, for all of his legendary political prowess, was never able to put together back to back majority Governments. He never got the votes that the present Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) got, and no one ever suggested that he didn't have a mandate.

To say that we do not have a mandate is ridiculous. I suppose they want a referendum, which is essentially an American device.

Let me say this: I hope that the Canadian people in watching this debate this evening—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Let him say anything that is original, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. MacKay: I only wish that the Canadian people had fuller coverage of this debate. We should ask ourselves why it is that we do not have television coverage of the type we would see when it is a convention or a sporting event that is being covered. The television perspective that goes out over the air waves from this House of Commons is not representative of what goes on here. Probably if it were, if we had reaction shots, if we could pan the House, if we could have split screens, we would see how much real determination there was in the Opposition to oppose this.

• (2250)

This is kicking the entrails around after the event. Both opposition Parties are trying to do now what they failed to do in the election. I hope we will all have a little sanity, go home and get on with the new agenda, in a new year, in a new Parliament. It is only 4,000 more days to the 21st century and it is not going to do us much good to be rehashing the past when there is so much to do in the future.

Mr. George Proud (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate you on your appointment. I feel you are doing a tremendous job with the discussions I

have heard going on across the floor for the last two weeks.

It is with great pleasure that I take this opportunity today to join my colleagues in the first session of the Thirty-fourth Parliament of Canada to participate in this debate on the legislation aimed at implementing the Free Trade Agreement between Canada and the United States.

I represent the federal constituency of Hillsborough, Prince Edward Island, a constituency steeped in rich Canadian tradition. I decided to re-enter public life because it has always been my desire to serve the community in which I live and work. I want to at this time thank the people of the riding of Hillsborough for electing me and putting their confidence in me.

We, as Canadians, pride ourselves in protecting our sovereignty; our right to choose how we want to live and under whose control, be it political or economical. Prince Edward Islanders generally, and my constituents of Hillsborough specifically, voted overwhelmingly against this trade deal. With over 85 per cent voter turn-out, the Liberal Party swept the four federal seats on Prince Edward Island. This was a resounding "no" to the trade deal.

As a Member of Parliament from Atlantic Canada, I am fully aware of the importance of liberalized trade. The Liberal Party has long supported international trade. This is a reality in Canadian economic life and has been for years. Historically Canadian Governments, including Liberal Governments, have been successful in lowering our tariffs. As a result 80 per cent of our exports to the United States are presently duty free. The remaining 20 per cent of tariffs, under this agreement, are to be phased out over the next 10 years, but to achieve this I believe we have given up too much to our neighbours to the south.

As I travelled throughout the constituency of Hillsborough, I was overwhelmed by the voices of concern; concern about our regional development programs, social programs, fisheries, farming, food processing and energy. These concerns have not changed since the federal election. My constituents still want their concerns heard. That is the mandate I received.

Proof of this is that since the election I have received numerous letters from Canadians across this country who have voiced their objections about the trade agreement. From British Columbia to Newfoundland, the concerns, although sometimes regional in nature, have a national thread. It is important to note that the