

The Leader of the Opposition when he was asked by the New York Times about business people who are saying, "John, you're on the wrong side of history", replied,

"The business organization that has been most vocal in strongly supporting this trade deal has been the Business Council on National Issues, and a considerable percentage of their members are American-owned."

Again, we see the innuendo, they can't be true Canadians if they support Free Trade.

Well, the Leader of the Opposition was wrong, as he has been so often in the Free Trade debate. As the Business Council pointed out to him in an open letter, over 90% of assets and about 75% of the control of member companies are in Canadian hands. The letter signed by David Culver, Chairman of Alcan, Alfred Powis, Chairman of Noranda, and Thomas d'Aquino (in their capacity as officers of the Business Council) went on to point out that:

"By embracing the rule of law, the [Free Trade Agreement] offers Canadians greater security and opportunity...in our books that is a plus for sovereignty."

Mr. Speaker, these are responsible spokesmen for Canadian business and they deserve to be treated as such.

Let me add one more quote from a respected business leader. In a recent letter the President of the Canadian Manufacturers Association, Laurent Thibault said:

"[The] CMA's support for the [Free Trade] Agreement represents a dramatic change for this association. Historically, Canadian manufacturers have been among protectionist voices. However, the world economy has changed dramatically and we must change with it.

"The new trading environment created by the FTA obviously poses great challenges to Canadian manufacturers, but the consensus among our members is that the FTA is a necessary strategic step that will help achieve our long-term objective of becoming globally competitive."

That is what the Free Trade Agreement is all about, Canada becoming more competitive in all export markets.