

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

receptive to a message of fear. The Liberals and Socialists were there to tell pensioners in all the homes for the Aged: "If free trade passes, you are going to lose your pension."

We saw former Ministers from the Trudeau era say the same thing and meddle in that scare campaign. Fortunately, we got the best of them because we told people the truth and proved to them that we were right. We told them: "It is your children or your parents between 30 and 65, the people who work and pay taxes in Canada, the industry, trade or business people who are aware of the need for access to the American market. It is those people who want free trade and you, who are older, younger or weaker, do not trust them. It is those people who pay taxes and give the country the money it needs to pay for your pensions." How do you think we can keep telling the needy that the country can pay for their pensions? A nation can pay for pensions in two ways. Together with the Socialists, the Liberals have found an original way to do it.

Their original solution was to borrow money and today our country owes \$335 billion because of the Liberals' mismanagement and their co-operation with the Socialists. So in order to pay out benefits, they took out loans. It is not politically dangerous to borrow money because those who are going to pay won't be voting on election day. Those who are going to pay are our children, grandchildren and even great-grandchildren. Because the Liberals have always understood that principle, they were able to get elected. They understood that if you can make others, but not voters, pay for your mistakes, you can get re-elected and continue to spend.

But our message appealed to reason. We proved to Canadians that, together with members of the workforce, we could and should continue paying for our pension systems because sooner or later we must set a limit on collective debt. It was necessary that our businesses made money. And we told people: Those who are employed must make money. It is not a sin to make money. It is important. When you make money, you pay taxes, with money earned not money borrowed. People understood, they got our message. They understood also the message of the men and women who supported us during the campaign, because free trade is a collective issue that concerns Canadians and not the issue of the Conservative Party only. It is the issue of Canadians. It is, for instance, the issue of the Prime Minister of Quebec, Robert Bourassa, and his team who say that

free trade is crucial for Quebec. The Quebec Government took position in an official manifesto in favour of free trade in all its aspects.

We also could count on the support of the Desjardins co-operative movement. And I am proud to talk about those things specifically, because the Desjardins movement was born in my riding 88 years ago. It is not a capitalist movement. It is a co-operative movement that today manages \$35 billion in assets. Two Quebecers out of every three, for million out of six million Quebecers are members of that movement. In a March 1988 manifesto, it formally took position for free trade and declared the signed agreement in particular a good one for jobs, for Quebec, for businesses, for social programs.

We also received, on the free-trade issue, the support of the Chambers of commerce of Canada and their 170,000 members, business people who sign pay cheques.

We also got for free trade the support and endorsement of a reliable body par excellence, the Economic Council of Canada. Closer to home, in the province of Quebec, we have received the support of the Dutil family and CanamManac in Beauce County, of Laurent Beaudoin and Bombardier and of former ministers from another political party. There are two political parties in Quebec. We have received the support of Bernard Landry and Rodrigue Tremblay, former ministers in the Quebec Government. We have received the support of Hervé Pomerleau, an extraordinary entrepreneur in Saint-Georges-de-Beauce, and Bernard Lamarre, who manages businesses worldwide and who is glad to be exporting to the United States. There are those who talk about small and medium-sized businesses. There are 80,000 small and medium-sized businesses that belong to the Canadian Federal of Independent Business.

In June 1988, the CFIB surveyed a number of small and medium-sized businesses—the corner confectionery, local gas station and small manufacturer—to identify their position on free trade. Because the Liberals and the socialists will say that small businesses are penalized.

In June, 80,000 questionnaires were sent out and 18,000 replies received. This is an extraordinarily large sample, considering that Gallup polls in Canada are based on a sample of 1,200 Canadians out of 27 million. We obtained 18,000 replies out of 80,000, and of these 18,000, 4.7 per cent were against free trade.

So I will tell those who say to us that small business is against free trade that they are wrong!