

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

constructive criticism of the Bill under consideration. Otherwise, they would have to bear the weight of a totally unacceptable rejection of Canadian public opinion.

To the new generations of Canadians, the rearguard fight led by the Hon. Members opposite will make them look like people from another century. We specifically want to give our future leaders a legacy of confidence in the future and openness to the world.

Those who don't think our culture can resist the American giant simply don't recognize the cultural vitality of this country with two flourishing languages and cultures that extend well beyond our borders.

It is easy to attack the winner and talk of arrogance, but by making such a judgement, we say that the people have elected candidates who are not up to the task. It is insulting to all voters.

At the economic level, we find the same vitality and influence beyond our borders. Isolation, introspection and an underdog mentality have long been the norm in this country. Either after Quebec went through that stage of its cultural and social development despite the demographic reality or, more recently, through the national position taken on the Free Trade Agreement, Canada has changed.

The change was for the better. Canadians are pre-occupied with real issues: quality of life, conservation, environmental upgrading, preventive health care for our elderly, technological change for our industries. Canadians of all origins want to move forward, to grow as individuals. They want closer ties with each other. They demand a healthier financial situation and a stronger economy for the benefit of all those who are a part of it.

Whatever preoccupations associated with the introduction of any treaty of this nature can be overcome. There is an implementation period for the agreement, there is a tribunal to ensure continuity in the exchange of views and to provide a forum for dispute arbitration. These features ensure that the gradual implementation of this treaty will have no dramatic or unilateral impact on the Canadian economy or one sector in particular.

Those who voted for us showed their support for the new economic opportunities which are now within our reach. And they did not do so with their eyes closed. Canadians realize in fact that adjustments will be required and that interim measures will change present habits and certainties. Change means adaptation. It will be the role of Government to manage this process of

change and the task force headed by Jean de Grandpré has the mandate to outline appropriate measures and to identify priority sectors needing assistance in the months and years to come.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to stress that in polarizing Canadians on this issue, the debate has provided an opportunity for Canada to cross a hurdle and take a great step forward as a nation. The notion of belonging to a vigorous and sovereign nation, one open to its own people and to the world, is one that can and must be nurtured.

And finally, I would remind those who see this period of history as critical that the Chinese symbol for crisis is made up of two characters, one of which stands for "danger", the other for "opportunity". We are free to believe that the present debate endangers our country, or that it offers the best opportunity to make another step forward in our nation-building process.

The people from Outremont who elected me to this Chamber realized they were offered an opportunity to go ahead and find a new prosperity. The act of faith the people from Outremont made was an act of faith in themselves, in their capacities and their desire to move forward. In that, Mr. Speaker, they resemble the rest of the Canadians composing our national mosaic. In that, Mr. Speaker, they expect from their elected Members that we quickly bring into effect the wishes they have expressed.

What is at stake in this debate goes beyond the jobs to be created, maintained or replaced, the new markets that will open up for us to take advantage of, and even the positive trade balance that will follow.

For the third time in this century, Canadians were invited to express their views on their trade relationship with the United States and, for the first time, they chose to embrace the future without losing sight of the reality. They thus indicated which road to follow, an historical road that we now have to explore, lay out and open up. In the same way that the transcontinental railroad was, section by section, conceived as a unification symbol of our Canadian nation, this agreement can be used to help Canadians reach together new feats.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I wish to remind Hon. Members the well known words written by Calixa Lavallée:

Car ton bras sait porter l'épée, Il sait porter la foi, Ton histoire est une épopée, Des plus brillants exploits . . .