

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

industrialized countries of the world. This agreement with the United States, our closest neighbour and largest trading partner, is the natural step to take.

Our young people have no guarantees when they leave the security of home. No one can say for sure how they will succeed. However, even the most protective of parents knows that the time has come and they must do it on their own. It is for them a step of faith. So it is with us. As we step into the free trading relationship with the United States, there are no guarantees. The studies are promising, but we must make it on our own. I have total confidence that our industries can compete. I have total confidence that we will succeed.

All Members in the House recognize that this has been a unique election. Never have the electorate of Canada wrestled with such a major issue. It has created a divided population. When campaigning door to door, it was not unusual to find a husband and wife on totally opposite sides of the free trade debate. Members of the House were fiercely engaged in this election and developed firmly entrenched positions. Normally once legislation is in place that is the end of the battle, but this is not normal legislation. When it is enacted on January 1 it will not be the end of anything. In fact, it will only be the start. It will be the initiation of a new beginning for Canada. Remember that there are no guarantees. Canadians must make this work. Our businesses and industries must respond to the challenge.

I do have a concern. Surely the direction, the leadership, and the motivation should be coming from Hon. Members of the House. Yet, many Members of this House have been violently opposing the Free Trade Agreement. Their concentration and focus has been on why it will not work, why industry will suffer, and why jobs will be lost. They have been conditioning themselves and their constituents to the failure of the Free Trade Agreement. My concern is that, if they are not careful, they could find themselves with a self-fulfilling prophecy in their ridings and perhaps elsewhere.

● (1450)

When the Members of the opposition Parties in this place next address their Chamber of Commerce or Board of Trade, will they continue to put down the Free Trade Agreement? Will they, in effect, encourage their constituents to invest elsewhere, in effect telling them to relocate in the U.S.? It would be so easy to continue the fight—but at what cost? From a political point of view, it could be to their advantage were the Free Trade

Agreement to fail. But at what cost to their constituents, and at what cost to Canadians?

If Hon. Members opposite take a few minutes in reflective thought, I am sure they will recognize the point I am trying to make.

There has been a lot of concern expressed in the media that those areas which did not vote Progressive Conservative will suffer. The answer, of course, is that this Government will treat all areas with fairness and equality. But, those areas which have elected a representative who, because of a lack of confidence in the Free Trade Agreement, a lack of vision, or for reasons of political expediency cannot or will not provide the positive leadership required, if we are to grasp the opportunities of the Free Trade Agreement, may have cause for concern.

I am proud to have had the opportunity of participating in this historic debate, and I am confident that the people of Canada made a good decision in their choice of Government.

Mr. Ron MacDonald (Dartmouth): Mr. Speaker, I wish to begin my remarks today by expressing my sincere thanks to the constituents of the riding of Dartmouth for having afforded me the great honour of representing them in the House of Commons. I consider the privilege to be able to stand in this great Chamber and speak on behalf of one's fellow citizens to be one of the greatest honours that a single individual can have bestowed on him.

On Tuesday last, when I first spoke in this House, I felt that special sense of history, of awe and of respect that I am sure every Member feels when first rising to add his/her voice to the record of *Hansard*. I thank the people of Dartmouth for allowing me to experience that very special feeling. I shall never forget them for having given me that moment.

The riding of Dartmouth is one of the fastest growing regions of Atlantic Canada, and for good reason. The riding itself is comprised of the beautiful City of Dartmouth, known all across North America as the City of Lakes. It is a family oriented community, a community in which people from all over Nova Scotia and all over North America have chosen to live and raise their families.

And there are other great communities in my riding that deserve special mention, among them being the community of Eastern Passage, with its fishing traditions, located on the shores of Halifax Harbour, and the