

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

I want to suggest that the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Mulroney), the Leader of the Liberal Party, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Turner), myself, and our respective Parties would share agreement when it comes to trade on the following matters. All three of Canada's national Parties want to expand trade. I have yet to hear a Member of the House of Commons who has said: "I am in favour of restricting trade. Let's go backwards." No one says that. No serious politician advocates that. We want expanded trade.

Second, we want expanded trade with our most important customer to the south, the United States of America. All three Parties agree with that. Having heard the Leader of the Opposition today and having heard him before, and having heard Government Members, we all recognize the need to expand trade elsewhere in the world. There is no disagreement with expanded trade with our neighbour to the south and with other countries in the world.

Third—and this is not frequently mentioned but I would enjoy hearing some Members, particularly from the Government, pick up on it—all three Parties in the House of Commons are for a reduction in tariffs and have been for a long time. We have supported the GATT process of gradually reducing tariffs, systematically, in a way that does no harm.

For countries in the Third World that, is done in the context that takes our national need, as well as that of other countries much stronger than ourselves, into account. All three Parties want a reduction in tariffs.

Next, I say to my fellow Canadians wherever they are tonight or this afternoon, watching this debate and listening to the arguments, that all three Parties in Canada's Parliament want higher employment levels. I have not heard anything to the contrary on that.

Finally I would say, if I understand all Parties, that no one is arguing the case for expanded protectionism in terms of trade in commodities between nations, either between us and the United States or between us and other countries in the world.

I would like to suggest through you, Madam Speaker, to the people of Canada that there are no major divisions among Canada's Parties on these important matters.

Some Hon. Members: Oh?

Mr. Broadbent: I have heard some questioning. Maybe there will be a contribution in the debate. I am saying that those stated goals are shared by all three national Leaders, by all three federal Parties. There are some very important differences.

In my comments in this debate today I want to deal with the present deal, the present negotiated proposal which the Government of Canada has entered into with the Government of the United States. In my comments today I am not going to dwell, as I did in contributing to this debate a few weeks ago, on the major aspects of this deal that have nothing to do with trade. The Leader of the Opposition touched upon some of

those today, and I went over those at great length before. The deal we have before us, I say to my fellow citizens, is much more than a trade deal. It is much more than simply an exchange of commitments between the Government of Canada and the Government of the United States about trade in commodities going across our borders.

● (1810)

What is involved in this deal goes to the root of what it means to be a nation. It touches upon the internal policies particularly of Canada because, let us have no illusions, we are one-tenth the size of the country to the south of us, and I will come back to that in a minute. The deal before us is not primarily a trade deal, although the Government will continue to talk about it in those terms.

I want now to get into what I think this deal really is all about and why not only New Democrats but increasingly among Canadians who have looked at it, whether in the West, in Central Canada or Atlantic Canada, the more they are aware of this deal, the more they are opposed to it.

Canadians share all those goals that I have just talked about. If the deal concerned only those goals, there would not be this debate. There would not have been protracted debate and questions in this House for the past two years if the deal had been restricted to the matter of commercial exchange between Canada and the United States. I want to deal with it and what I think is so seriously at fault with it, what it means to be a Canadian, and what it means for our country in the long run.

It was Sir John A. Macdonald, a bright, imaginative Conservative Prime Minister, the father of our country, who, in thinking about relationships between Canada and the United States, never made the mistake of thinking about them exclusively in economic terms. He said: "It might be that the lion and the lamb would lie down together but the lamb would be inside the lion". I profoundly believe that the question future historians will be asking about this particular period in Canadian history is the following: How did the Party of Sir John A. Macdonald come to advocate, at the end of the 20th century, a policy whose essence is the opposite to what he devoted his life's struggle to? In short, how could the present Leader of the Conservative Party, the present Prime Minister of Canada, sign a deal that the President of the United States quite accurately described not long ago as "a new economic constitution for North America"?

I think future historians will be asking about Conservative premiers as well, without exception, from Nova Scotia, Newfoundland, Saskatchewan, Alberta, and indeed because he is a Conservative whatever his label, the Premier of British Columbia. How could all those Conservatives agree to a deal which, according to the U.S. trade representative Clayton Yuetter, will mean after 20 years, in his felicitous phrase, that Canada "will be sucked into the United States economy"?