

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Kenora—Rainy River is a very beautiful part of Canada, one which has potential not only in the natural resource sector but in tourism and the service industries. Agriculture is also a very significant aspect of the southern portion of the riding.

The Kenora—Rainy River riding has tremendous potential, potential that as yet has not begun to be tapped. That potential will be severely handicapped if this Free Trade Agreement goes through.

In an area like northwestern Ontario the need for the Government to take an active role is essential to achieving growth and prosperity. From the mid-1930s to the election of the Government in 1984, the strategic objective of successive Canadian Governments in trade negotiations has been to increase the standard of living of Canadians by obtaining improved and more secure access to foreign markets at reasonable costs which do not put our independence at risk and provide some flexibility to continue protecting a few industries that have difficulty competing with imports.

Why this Government has thrown those objectives out the window only God and their corporate friends can answer.

Because of the Government's need to pursue its political objectives, my riding stands to be a big loser under this agreement, as does all of northern Ontario. I guess the Tories already know this because all they have to do is look around and across the aisle to notice that only one of their Members out of twelve are left. The Hon. Member for Timiskaming must feel awfully lonely.

● (2340)

Mr. MacDougall: No, I feel great.

Mr. Nault: Due to the 1987 softwood lumber understanding and its grandfathering by Article 1910 of the agreement, the Government has in effect killed the softwood lumber industry in northern Ontario. Adam Zimmerman, chief executive officer and chairman of Noranda Forests Incorporated, recently stated that the lumber agreement cost Canada's forest products industry more than \$1 billion in 1987. Does that not seem to be an odd way to reduce costs, raise real incomes, and create new jobs?

On behalf of those men and women who have lost their jobs because of the Government's lack of intestinal fortitude or guts, I would like to say thanks for nothing.

I will not apologize for the people of Kenora—Rainy River who have voted against the Free Trade Agreement. As the Liberal Party has continuously said over and over, we are in favour of trade. We are free enterprisers, but we believe our country has been sold down the river by this Government.

What is it that we as Liberals have against this particular Free Trade Agreement? Is it, as the Conservatives would lead us to believe, for political reasons, or is it truly because this is the most poorly negotiated deal in history?

We have given away our forestry industry and our agricultural sector. We have given away our energy resources, and more specifically control over these resources, to the point that policy in this sector will be controlled in Washington, not in the halls of the Legislatures of our great country.

Due to its hidden agenda which is to tie the hands of future Governments and to limit the role of the Government of Canada, the Government has entered into a harmonization of economic policy. What does this harmonization mean? To me, it means the same wages for workers in this country as for those in the U.S. It means less contribution by business for the benefits of workers. It means less unemployment insurance for Canadians in the long term. It means that pension moneys given by business will be eroded because of the pressure to compete with comparable American businesses to achieve a so-called level playing field.

I am very ashamed that this Government will be allowed to widen even further the gap between the rich and the poor.

The Tory Government is in the process of creating a fragmented society, a society which will not nurture the areas of the country which are vulnerable to boom and bust cycles, areas like northern Ontario which rely so heavily on natural resources and the industries that go along with these resources.

Under the Free Trade Agreement, subsidizing industry during these difficult times will be prohibited. So much for regional development in regions of Canada like Kenora—Rainy River. I suggest that if members on the government side really care about the regions of the country which need government assistance, they should join with me in recommending an amendment to the FTA which would allow maintenance of regional development.