

Recently, a prominent Canadian paper listed the dire consequences opponents of free trade forecast.

Let me list some of those:

- an end to an independent foreign policy,
- an end to medicare, hospital insurance, unemployment insurance, subsidized education and day care,
- an end to supplementary payments to old age pensioners,
- an end to labour codes and workplace health and safety legislation,
- a threat to bilingualism.

In other words, the end of Canada as we know it. This is pure, unadulterated fear-mongering, and is nothing short of ludicrous. Those who espouse this kind of nonsense seriously short-change Canadians and their governments. What government would compromise Canada's political sovereignty, our social programs, our commitment to fight regional disparities, our special linguistic character, our unique cultural identity? The answer is no Conservative government.

This government has confidence in our future and our ability to compete in the world. We believe that a commercial treaty will not present a threat to Canada's existence as an independent sovereign nation. We will continue to maintain independent foreign and domestic policies.

I am a Canadian nationalist. Brian Mulroney is a Canadian nationalist. Donald MacDonald is a Canadian nationalist. Peter Lougheed is a Canadian nationalist. Our critics have no monopoly on love for, or pride in, this country.

One of Canada's leading journalists, Richard Gwynn, has indicated that a:

"Bilateral free trade would represent the ultimate declaration by Canadians of self-confidence in themselves, confidence both in their ability to compete and in their ability to continue as a distinct political and social unit."

I believe Canadians have that confidence. Thank you.