

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

But we are here debating a serious subject which goes to the very heart and core of the country.

As the Minister for International Trade said this morning, it is not a new debate. He made it sound as if the pro-free traders have just been waiting on the precipice of history to come to this divine goal one day, that they are somehow divinely ordained, pre-ordained to bring us this new Valhalla, this new heaven upon earth. What he did not say is that this is a debate that has brought the country into internal conflict generation after generation. I have to say that his reading of history is very strange and unique. He talked about Laurier, King and Pearson as being somehow proponents of free trade with the United States. I would like to remind you, Madam Speaker, and the House that in all the cases he cited free trade was defeated by the Canadian people. Elections were held and they withdrew.

What he did not say is an interesting footnote to history. In 1849 the merchant class of Montreal, Canada's business elite—342 Canadians who were the princes of Canadian industry at that time—signed what? They signed an annexation manifesto to join with the United States. Why? Because they had lost the preferential tariff under the British system. Free of having this country pursue its own independent course, what did that merchant class at that time based on the Conservative Party of Canada decide was the solution to Canada's problems? Annexation by the United States. That has been a train of thought, a philosophy, and a Pavlovian response by the same group ever since. Every time they feel a challenge, every time they feel that there is something out there that will threaten the comfortable cocoon, what is their solution? Annexation by the United States. Unfortunately, the problem is that for the first time in 100 years the so-called Montreal merchant class has a Prime Minister who agrees with them. That is the problem. They finally got a national government in sympathy with those views.

• (1530)

This morning I listened to the Minister for International Trade talk about history as somehow being on the side of the free traders. Yes, there were powerful forces and powerful coalitions promoting this cause since the inception of this country, but fortunately time after time when it came forward it was beaten back and disregarded.

The Minister for International Trade rose and stated that 1911 was a classic example of the value given by history to free trade. What he did not mention is that when the Government went to the polls, the Laurier people were defeated, with a large defection of Liberals on the side, including for one, Edward Blake, the major Grit leader in Ontario. The fact of the matter is that it was a serious debate but it was defeated. When Mackenzie King sat down and had this discussion with the Americans, why did he not go ahead? Because he realized very clearly that it would give the Americans what they want, and that would be final control of this continent. Therefore, the history lesson supplied this morning by the Minister for

International Trade was highly selective and distorted, to say the least.

One thing strikes everybody seemingly strange, and I must say I was waiting for an answer when I listened to the Minister for International Trade this morning as he quoted Laurier, King, Gerry Regan, and Donald Macdonald. The person he did not quote was the present Prime Minister of Canada. In 1983, in his last pre-election statement on the issue, he stated: "Free trade with the United States affects Canadian sovereignty and we will have none of it, not during leadership campaigns, or any other time". He went on to state: "Free trade with the United States is like sleeping with an elephant". The Prime Minister further stated: "Canadian plants wouldn't be able to compete with larger scale U.S. firms". The Prime Minister also stated: "Canadians rejected free trade with the United States in 1911, they would do so again in 1983".

It is funny that we did not hear those quotes from the Minister for International Trade this morning. Is it not unusual that he did not quote his leader who had made all those statements?

A previous Prime Minister, who competed in the same leadership campaign, and is now the distinguished Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark), stated: "Ontario and Quebec would be the hardest hit because of their industries, but we are in a position to benefit earlier from technological measures. When you are moving towards a common market—" for all those Tories who say that harmonization is not a problem, let me cite to them the words of the Secretary of State for External Affairs. He stated: "You must accept some other ties. Our health insurance system is much more sophisticated than theirs, as well as some of our environmental or health standards, and they could be jeopardized. To ignore our interest outside the U.S. would also be in danger".

I did not hear the Minister for International Trade quote the Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs. Yet I thought the Secretary of State for External Affairs made some very important statements back in 1983.

The Minister of Trade stated this morning that we have a great Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson). He really understands what is going on. Let me quote the Minister of Finance who stated: "Talk of bilateral free trade strikes me as simplistic and naive. The U.S. has its national interest and we should enunciate clearly and pursue vigorously our own. Too much would have to be compromised especially by Canada to make a mutually acceptable broad master plan the best option". "Too much would have to be compromised", says the Minister of Finance.

The distinguished Minister of Veterans Affairs (Mr. Hees), dean of the House, has stated the same thing. "Free trade is a threat to our sovereignty". I suspect that a large part of the present front bench of the Conservative Party has a similar point of view. Therefore, the question has to be asked, why divide the country when in 1983 all those sages of Canadian