

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Generally, that type of allegation is made behind closed doors. But in this last election, some of the candidates actually had the temerity to say to people that if they voted in the Progressive Conservatives, they would lose their pensions; that they would not be able to stay in their nursing homes. All we had was the gloom and doom.

Fortunately, that did not work over-all, and I am sure that the Liberal Party, in the years ahead, will come to regret those intemperate statements, particularly when the manifest falsehoods become apparent. I am sure that those Liberal candidates who were elected by Nova Scotians in this last election will have a rather heavy burden to discharge when the electorate calls them to account for some of the statements made.

It seems to me that the more one looks at the trade deal, the more one realizes that it is an idea whose time has come—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Where did you get that phrase?

Mr. MacKay: I can say that I did not get it from the Leader of the Opposition. It is far too good and too resounding to have as its source the Leader of the Opposition.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): It is a real grabber.

Mr. MacKay: The Free Trade Agreement will be in place for many, many years. The question I have for my friends opposite is: Why are you looking at this agreement as though it were some sort of a doomsday arrangement?

The Leader of the Opposition knows very well, as does the Leader of the New Democratic Party, that implementation of the Free Trade Agreement will extend over the next decade. It will be a gradual implementation. And if there is anything that is unsatisfactory about it, assuming it cannot be modified, assuming we are looking at a doomsday scenario in fact, the arrangement can be terminated. The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition knows that—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): “Just another commercial contract.”

Mr. MacKay: Well, the Leader of the Opposition says that it is “just another commercial contract”—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): That is what your Leader said.

Mr. MacKay: It is a sovereign treaty, but treaties can be changed.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Isn't that beautiful.

Mr. MacKay: The Auto Pact has operated to the benefit of Canada, but that notwithstanding, the Liberal Government that implemented the Auto Pact took a lot of abuse from the Opposition, and particularly from the New Democrats—

An Hon. Member: And the Tories.

Mr. MacKay: It was said by the Opposition that the Auto Pact would mean the end of the auto industry in Canada, that part suppliers were going to be ruined. The Government of the Day even set aside support payments.

Those support payments were never needed. The Auto Pact has worked very well. But, as the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition knows, the Auto Pact is not sacrosanct; it can be cancelled—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): And it is not a free trade agreement either.

Mr. MacKay: Well, if it is not a free trade agreement, it is a sectoral agreement—

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): You've got it.

Mr. MacKay: —and we all know that sectoral agreements were tried and did not work.

We all know how a former Liberal Minister of Finance, the Hon. Donald Macdonald, feels about free trade. We know how many of the leading lights in the Liberal Party feel about it—and that is the puzzlement.

Laurence Decore, one of the leading Liberals in the West, supports free trade; eight of the ten provincial Premiers support free trade; Senator Van Roggen supports free trade.

The Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition does not support it. He feels it is wrong. Perhaps he is right. But I tell you, most Canadians do not think he is right—and this is why I cannot understand why we are here, with Christmas approaching, debating the issue.

Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra): Let's not forget that 57 per cent of the Canadian electorate voted against you.