

Government Orders

The way business is conducted today would have been inconceivable to our counterparts less than a generation ago. Fibre optics, laptop computers, fax transmissions, interactive video, the quick transformation of research into technology to create new products and services has ceased to amaze and is now routine. This government has worked hard to prepare our economy for the global marketplace. With the framework we have put into place Canadians will exploit it to their advantage.

Canadians do not fear the future. They are leaders. They make the future work for them and profit from it. The creation of a North American free trade area is one of the future's opportunities. It will contribute positively to our greater competitiveness and prosperity.

It provides us with a larger market, allowing us to take advantage of both economies of scale and market specialization. In doing so, it better equips Canadian industry and workers to tackle other world markets with increasing success. This applies not only to the larger Latin American market to which Mexico offers an obvious opening, but also to the economies of Asia-Pacific, Europe and the Middle East. Developing the skills and adapting to the demands of the North American free trade area will clearly assist us in other markets.

Eight and a half years ago, the government set itself the task of looking to the future and outward to the world. The opposition would like Canadians to hunker down in the claustrophobic shadow of the way things once were. This is not the fate this government wishes for this great nation. It wants to fulfil Canada's vocation as a world leader, committed to a stable international economy, environmentally sustainable growth, developing new markets and finding new economic partners.

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When we pursue this progressive agenda, we inevitably create high quality jobs for Canadians and strengthen the foundations of our prosperity. The North American free trade agreement is proof and a solid demonstration of that commitment.

In closing, I travel to a lot of countries and a lot of trade missions. I meet many exporters from other countries and ask them: What country in the world would you like to have assured access to? What is your most

important market? With what country would you like to have a fair and binding means of settling trade disputes? In all cases, the answer is the United States.

We have that with the free trade agreement. We have something others would give their eye teeth for. Now we are broadening the relationship to include Mexico. We are very fortunate people in Canada to have this. Let us not squander that success. Let us approve the free trade agreement with Canada, the United States and Mexico.

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Etobicoke North): Madam Speaker, one does not need to be a partisan of any particular political ideology to recognize that trade has emerged as one of the most important issues facing Canadians over the last several years.

In 1988 the country was embroiled in an unprecedented debate over the century-old question of whether Canada should enter into a free trade arrangement with the United States. Now, only four years later, Canadians are being asked to contemplate the inclusion of Mexico in a more extensive North American free trade agreement, an agreement which will, in all likelihood, be extended to other countries by the end of this decade.

This is taking place against a backdrop of the yet uncertain Uruguay round of the GATT which, if implemented, will be more pervasive and far-reaching than the agreement we are contemplating today.

Why trade is of increasing salience to Canadians is not a difficult question to answer. Globalization, the combined processes of increasing international trade, growing financial integration and rising direct foreign investment is rapidly opening national economies to the world, whether they want to be opened or not.

At root, this process is not being driven by ideologies or even policies, contrary to what its detractors may think, but mainly by technology and such superficially prosaic developments as microprocessors, fibre optic networks, communications satellites and transnational corporations.

Ironically, given its current ideological label, late 20th century globalization has come to epitomize what Karl Marx once postulated was the power of technological determinism. The minister quotes Macaulay and I am quoting Karl Marx.