

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement*

Agreement had been debated for 331 and a half hours over the course of 64 days, and I think we can now add to that another 40 to 50 hours. The finest tribute that can be paid to Canadian democracy is the extent of debate that can take place in a free Parliament on an important issue such as this, a Parliament whose sittings have been extended to accommodate the debate.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Langdon:** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Speaker:** The Hon. Member for Essex-Windsor on a point of order.

**Mr. Langdon:** Mr. Speaker, I am wondering whether the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) can explain the number of uses of closure in this debate as part of parliamentary democracy—

**Mr. Speaker:** I must point out to the Hon. Member that his remarks do not constitute a valid point of order but, rather, a question, and it is one which will have to be saved for another occasion. The Right Hon. Prime Minister.

**Mr. Mulroney:** Mr. Speaker, to respond to the question raised by the Hon. Member, and any implications arising therefrom, probably the most eloquent and sensible answer was delivered one month ago today by the very distinguished Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent), who said, and I quote: "The people of Canada have taken a decision and Mr. Mulroney has the right to continue now with his free trade legislation."

Because the Leader of the New Democratic Party is widely regarded as a democrat, he then went on to say something that I would ask the Hon. Member to bear in mind, and it is as follows: "Given the election results, it would now be churlish and inappropriate in my thinking, right now, to say something more that should be done in terms of the law at this stage. It should pass."

Those were the words of the Leader of the New Democratic Party one month ago today. I believe the Hon. Member would agree that there has been adequate discussion. This sense of democracy was expressed as well by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner), who has said many times in this House and elsewhere: "On a matter of this importance, let the people decide." And, Mr. Speaker, the people have decided.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mulroney:** May I, *en passant*, deal with one of the more specious arguments ever raised on the floor of this House of Commons, and it is in connection with the latest theory of some Members of this House that the election was won by someone other than those sitting on the right hand of the Speaker.

The argument seems to be that the British parliamentary system no longer exists, that somehow there is a new system, a referendum/republican system in place somehow, somewhere; that it is the majority of the number of votes on the other side that counts, and not the number of seats, as we have believed since the founding of this nation.

Well, for those who hold that view—and nothing could be more spurious, or unfair, or in violation of the fundamental principles of the British parliamentary system—let me just deal with it on the basis of our most recent history.

In the Twenty-eighth Parliament, elected in 1968, a Parliament of which the Leader of the Opposition was a Member, the Government of the Day, a Liberal Government, obtained 45 per cent of the vote; in 1973, the Liberal Government of the day obtained 38.5 per cent of the vote. In 1974, an election in which the Leader of the Opposition participated actively, the Liberal Government obtained 43.2 per cent of the vote and introduced wage and price controls.

In 1980, the Liberal Government obtained 44.3 per cent of the vote and introduced the National Energy Program and patriated the Constitution, with the problems that that has given rise to. And while I disagree—

**Mr. Gauthier:** You all voted for it.

**Mr. Mulroney:** While I disagree very fundamentally with the National Energy Program, and while I disagree with some of the problems inherent in the Constitution, I never once quarrelled with the legitimacy of the Liberal Governments in those periods to proceed with those measures, the reason being that in each case the Government had received, not in terms of popular vote but in number of seats, a clear majority from the people of Canada.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I rise with pride to take part in the final chapter of this important debate in the history of our country. On November 21 Canadians expressed their confidence in Canada and in their future together. They gave our Government the mandate to take Canada