

Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Throughout the debate, we have heard many comments on mandates. In the constituency of Wetaskiwin, it was a tough election, and a tough decision had to be made. Although there were other very serious concerns like the environment, deficit reduction, job creation, the criminal justice and parole system, all of which I am sure this House will address in due time, the major question was the Free Trade Agreement. On November 21, Wetaskiwin decided. The Progressive Conservative Party lost one poll, tied one and won 170.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Littlechild: I believe I have a mandate, as we won more votes than all of the other six candidates combined.

Let me now address a matter of which I am particularly proud to mention. A small but important part of my constituency, 6 per cent in fact, includes the Four Nations of Hobbema. I am a member of the Ermineskin Tribe of Cree Indians in Hobbema.

During my first campaign, I referred to a quote by one of our country's greatest patriots, Chief Dan George, when he said:

Let me humbly accept this new culture and through it rise up and go on. Like the thunderbird of old, I shall rise again out of the sea; I shall grab the instruments of the white man's success—his education, his skills. With these new tools, I shall build my race into the proudest segment of your society. I shall see our young braves and our chiefs sitting in the houses of law and government, ruling and being ruled by the knowledge and freedoms of our great land.

One of the great leaders of the Four Nations of Hobbema, Chief John Samson, started this dream along the path of reality in the early sixties when he hitchhiked here to Ottawa with Mr. Stan Daniels to bring native concerns to Canada's attention.

I would like to indicate that many of those concerns, for example as they relate to energy, health, agriculture and others, are very similar to areas outside of the Four Nations of Hobbema. I must, however, indicate to the House that I was dismayed, to put it politely and mildly, when anti-free traders came to our reserves. They came to scare our people, as they did in other areas, whether it was about social programs or sovereignty.

An Hon. Member: What a lot of rubbish.

Mr. Littlechild: On the reserves they said: "You will lose the Indian Act. You will lose your treaty rights if you support the Free Trade Agreement." This was proliferated without any substantiated arguments whatsoever. Perhaps it was because they knew that the

Constitution Act, Section 25 and Section 35, entrench those treaty rights, and the Free Trade Agreement has nothing to do with that whatsoever.

The Four Nations of Hobbema have been doing business in the United States for the last eight years at least. They have not lost their sovereignty. They have not lost their social services. They have not lost their treaty rights. They now have a chance to continue maximizing on those economic opportunities in the United States as they work toward self-reliance.

With the mandate expressed in Wetaskiwin, including Devon, Calmar, Thorsby, Warburg, Breton, Bentley, Rimbey, Buck Lake, Alder Flats, Ferintosh, Mulhurst, Ma-Me-O, Nisku and all points in between, we want to register support for the Free Trade Agreement and, in particular, Bill C-2.

Last, I want to refer to youth because a significant part of our population is 25 years of age and under. As future employers, employees and consumers, we should provide as secure an economic environment as possible. According to the Economic Council of Canada, the Canada-U.S. agreement will lead to the creation of an additional 30,600 jobs in Alberta. I want to ensure Wetaskiwin gets its share. The Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) said in this House on October 5, 1988:

We go forward with confidence in our future, confidence in our country and, most of all, confidence in the youth of Canada . . . We have set a course for a stronger, a more united and a more prosperous Canada.

We want to ensure to those youth in the Wetaskiwin constituency that there will be a positive opportunity for them to become nation builders, nation builders as all of our elders, parents and senior citizens have been in the past.

In conclusion, I would ask the pessimists of this agreement to consider: What if it works? Are we as Canadians afraid of success?

An Hon. Member: If it works, that is fantastic.

Mr. Littlechild: As a Golden Bear, I learned early that the only limits we have are those we place on ourselves.

I want to return with a gift to my constituency this Christmas season: Yes, Wetaskiwin youth, you can have those jobs because you can compete. Go for it, Hugh Denim, Derrick Thorne, Ralph Vold, Four Nations, because you can compete. The Free Trade Agreement