

Statement

Discours

Minister for  
International  
Trade



Ministre du  
Commerce  
extérieur

88/57

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NOTES FOR A STATEMENT

BY THE MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE,

JOHN C. CROSBIE

ON RE-INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO

IMPLEMENT THE CANADA-UNITED STATES

FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

OTTAWA

December 14, 1988.

Canada

Today I had the honour of re-introducing legislation to implement the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. The bill approves the Agreement and amends those laws necessary to meet our obligations under the Agreement.

Apart from a few technical corrections, the bill introduced in the House of Commons today is identical in substance to the implementing legislation that I introduced on May 24. (These corrections and other drafting changes are described in detail in materials which accompany the bill.)

That earlier bill was approved by the House of Commons on August 31 and approved in principle by the Senate, but the Senate majority indicated they would not approve the legislation until there had been an election.

In the recent election, Free Trade was a central issue and Canadians gave this government a renewed mandate with a majority in Parliament. Parliament is now being asked to approve the implementing legislation by January 1, 1989, the date specified in the Agreement.

Early passage of the legislation is important to Canadians who are planning their business and investment activities to take advantage of the opportunities that Free Trade will bring.

With implementation of the Agreement, Canadians will begin to realize the benefits of Free Trade as access to the U.S. market is enhanced and made more secure.

Canadians can expect growth in exports, jobs and investment, as well as higher incomes and lower consumer prices. And we will become more competitive internationally.

As tariffs are phased out over 10 years...an aspect of the Agreement which Opposition parties did not oppose... some workers in Canada will be displaced. Studies indicate that the numbers will be low nationally, a very small fraction of the millions of Canadians who change jobs annually.

To workers displaced for any reason...Free Trade or otherwise...the government offers a wide range of training, job search and relocation programs under the \$1.5 billion Canadian Jobs Strategy. And, as the Government has stated repeatedly, we will ensure that these services are available for any Canadian who needs them.

To ensure that we are doing all that needs to be done, the Government appointed the Advisory Council on Adjustment chaired by Jean de Grandpré to assess whether further measures are needed and, if so, what they should be.

Canada is one of the world's greatest trading nations. Three million jobs in this country depend on trade, more than two million of them on exports to the United States.

This Government has sought to build on the system of international trade rules in a way that creates new opportunities for increased prosperity in all regions of Canada. In doing so, we have pursued a two-track policy in trade negotiations, to liberalize trade bilaterally with our largest partner, the United States, and to seek improved multilateral rules for global trade under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade.

Progress multilaterally can be difficult given the diversity of interests among the almost 100 member states in the GATT, as we found recently at the meetings in Montreal. However, we have achieved the Free Trade Agreement bilaterally with the United States, which was negotiated under and will operate within the framework of GATT rules.

It is now time to get on with the tasks of implementing the Free Trade Agreement and of working with Canadians to maximize benefits under the Agreement.

035500005