

Right Hon. Brian Mulroney (Prime Minister)

“My Government introduced this historic initiative to create jobs and ensure economic equality for all regions of Canada.”

When we decided to engage officially in trade negotiations with the United States, we knew this would be controversial, that all the old bug bears would be resurrected and that it would fan the flames of past partisan debate on the subject. We have decided to go ahead, regardless of the political risk, because we felt it was in the national interest. Why? Simply because without economic prosperity, there can be no cultural and social development in Canada, and to provide for prosperity, we must preserve and expand our export markets.

Canadians export to many countries in the world, but our main market, and in fact the wealthiest and biggest market on this planet is the United States, our next door neighbour. The jobs of several million Canadians depend on it, but access for our goods and services to the U.S. market, as to any other market, is being increasingly threatened by the wave of protectionism and the undue recourse to legislation that presently predominates in international trade.

Our over-all objective is clear-cut. It is to try to carve out a unique trading relationship with the United States of America that will create jobs, end trade harassment, introduce stability, eliminate trade barriers, enhance competitiveness, spur productivity and build an instrument of liberalized

trade between the two greatest trading partners in the world. It will be an agreement that can serve as a model for all countries seeking relief from protectionism, growth in the Third World and more liberalized access to markets everywhere.

This is not a selfish initiative but it has clear advantages to both sides. We hope it will eventually be seen as a signal against the kinds of vulgar and selfish measures of protectionism and be seen as a noble example of generosity and growth. We can show all developing countries in the world that it is not an initiative of protectionism or cutting off our markets but one by which markets can grow and we can accept more and more goods from Third World countries so that we genuinely contribute through trade to building a better and more equitable world.

Our highest priority is to have an agreement that ends the threat to Canadian industry from U.S. protectionists who harass and restrict our exports through the misuse of trade remedy laws. Let me leave no doubt that first, a new regime on trade remedy laws must be part of the agreement. Second, because trading is so clearly a two-way street, our negotiators have been instructed to ensure that the elimination of existing tariffs takes place gradually, with adequate transition arrange-