

# CHAPTER IX

## CONCLUSIONS

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If Canadians say they want a distinct country, it is not because they think they are better than others. It is because they want to do things they consider important and do them in their own way. And they want Canadian actions and life styles to reflect distinctly Canadian perspectives and a Canadian view of the world.

Mitchell Sharp

International trade has played and will continue to play a vital role in the Canadian economy. The international environment of the 1980s will be highly competitive characterized by the ever increasing interdependence of national economies and it will thus be crucial to improve our productivity performance and face the world with a leaner and tougher economy. Our trade performance will depend on the degree to which investment, R&D etc., lead to a more efficient and internationally competitive domestic economy. This will require that domestic and trade policies adapt to changing circumstances, including increased sensitivity to regional interests and concerns, and a supportive environment for productive investment and technology. It will be equally important to build greater awareness among all Canadians of the benefits of international trade.

Trade and trade policy have always played a key role in promoting the efficiency and competitiveness of each sector of the Canadian economy. A principal feature of that policy has been its consistency: successive governments have pursued a policy of gradual movement towards freer trade. Central challenges of a sound and balanced trade policy will be to continue to enhance the opportunities of various sectors of the Canadian economy and its regions to expand investment and production facilities and create jobs offered by further penetration of world markets. Canada's future trade performance will thus continue to reflect Canada's economic strengths: the continuing importance of resource development and of resource-based products, at various stages of processing, as our principal export earners; the growing importance of a strong, outward-looking secondary manufacturing sector; and the gradual development of an export-oriented services sector. Equally important will be the need to encourage the process of adjustment in Canada to facilitate, on an equitable basis, the phase-out of non-viable, non-competitive industrial sectors and companies.

Canadian trade policy is not established in a vacuum. It affects other government policy options and, in turn, is affected by the other economic policies being pursued by the government. Equally factors external to Canada condition the kind of objectives and policies which the government can pursue. Achieving more efficient and internationally competitive Canadian resource, manufacturing and service industries may require a greater coordination and coherence between trade policy objectives, broader foreign policy objectives, and various domestic policies such as