

Our negotiators are meeting today. Therefore, it is not in their interests to mention specific negotiating positions. However, I do want to say what is on the table and why we are dealing with these matters. Tariffs are on the table because experience has shown that the Canadian economy has prospered through tariff reduction. This is so even with the Auto Pact which the Opposition keeps bringing up. Members of the Opposition fail to mention that tariffs have come down steadily with the Auto Pact. For vehicles, they have come down from around 17.5 per cent to around 9.2 per cent. For auto parts, they have come down from as high as 25 per cent to 9.2 per cent. We have been reducing tariffs for years, and in the trade talks we are seeking to reduce them to zero on Canada-U.S. trade over a period of 10 or 15 years, whatever is negotiated.

Non-tariff barriers are on the table. Since the early 1970s, non-tariff barriers to trade have proliferated. Some are clear, imposing quotas on imports, for example. Some are not so clear, using technical or health standards for protectionism rather than for legitimate purposes. Another item on the table is government procurement practices. We are seeking to drop our "Buy Canadian" for their "Buy American" and as the Prime Minister pointed out today, 1 per cent of American government procurement could create 75,000 jobs in Canada.

Also on the table are customs matters. We want to facilitate commerce between the two countries by reducing the paperwork at the border. That will mean lower costs for Canadian businessmen. Agriculture is also on the table. I have touched upon the massive global problems we face in agriculture and they exist because there has been insufficient progress in bringing international rules to agriculture trade.

We know that we cannot resolve all our trading problems in the U.S.-Canada bilateral, but we can deal with some of them. We can deal with some tariffs, we can deal with health standards and we can deal with dispute settlement mechanisms that are used to harass agricultural products. Agriculture is very much a part of these talks.

Also on the table are subsidies and related measures. Those are important to regional development because under the existing trade laws, we often do not know what kind of subsidies we can use in regional development plans without bringing on U.S. trade actions. We want clear rules. We want to know what programs we will be able to implement for regional development. The existing international rules are