



Statements and Speeches

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NEW INITIATIVES FOR TRADING WITH PACIFIC RIM COUNTRIES

Statement by the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Vancouver Board of Trade, Vancouver, October 23, 1985.

There are two reasons for Canadians to talk about trade. One is that we can't help it. Almost 30 per cent of our gross national product results from international trade — double the dependence on trade of Japan, triple the dependence of the United States. Of the seven countries at the Economic Summit, only Germany depends on exports more than we do. In this province alone, trade with just Japan is worth \$1 200 for every man, woman and child. Trade with just Japan accounts for 45 000 jobs in British Columbia alone. Whenever we talk about creating jobs, or funding social programs, or encouraging culture, or asserting our sovereignty, we are talking about trade. Part of the Canadian reality is that we have to compete internationally to survive.

Another part of the Canadian reality is that we can compete internationally. We can be as good as the best of our competition, whether the subject is transportation, technology, or petrochemicals, or ballet. That self-confidence is the second reason to talk about trade. Nations grow gradually to maturity, like people do. At one stage of our national life, it may have been appropriate to insist on general protection — through tariffs, and restraints on investment, and government ownership of enterprises. Now, a more mature Canada can be more selective about the protection we require, and more sure of our strengths. Of course we will need some protection. Every country does. There is no absolute market economy except in the text books. But stronger nations have less need of protection, and whether your standard is resources, or skills, or ingenuity, or self-confidence, this is a strong nation.

The old regime assumed Canada was vulnerable, and put up barriers. We assume that Canada is strong, and look for opportunities to express that strength. An immense opportunity awaits us in world trade — and we are reaching out to embrace it — in multilateral negotiations for a more open world trading system; in bilateral negotiations with the United States; in trade missions, and productivity seminars, and new offices abroad.

We will be encouraging exports everywhere, but two large markets have special potential, particularly for Western Canada. One is the United States, where we have the challenge of keeping existing markets, as well as winning new ones. The other is the Pacific Rim, which we believe will be the major source of new growth for Canada in years to come.

Ten years ago, Canada's transpacific immigration surpassed our transatlantic immigration, for the first time in history. Two years ago, our Pacific trade surpassed our Atlantic trade, for the first time. In 1979, an earlier, shorter-lived Progressive Conservative government organized the first National Conference on Canada and the Pacific Rim. That government, like this one, contained leading ministers from Western Canada, who know how much of our future lies to our west. For 100 years, Canada has been a Pacific nation in geography, and we intend to make it a Pacific nation in mentality too.
