

High Commissioner and Mr. Wain, it is a very special honour for me to be here with you today, and for a variety of reasons. It is not simply because you are among the world's most distinguished and enterprising business people -- although you certainly are. Nor only because many of you are among the core group of Canada's oldest trading relationship -- although, again, you assuredly are. But some of you may recall that it was to the Canada-U.K. Chamber of Commerce, on Armistice Day of 1984, that I gave my first overseas address as Canada's Minister for International Trade, and the kind welcome I received -- perhaps I might even say tolerance for a beginner -- is a memory that I hold very dear.

A great deal has happened since then, of course. Fifteen months ago, I reported that our Government intended to scrap Canada's destructive National Energy Policy.

We did.

Fifteen months ago, I said we were going to get rid of the repressive Foreign Investment Review Agency so that Canada could once again be "open for business."

We did and it is.

Fifteen months ago, I said our Government was embarking on the long and difficult course of National Economic Renewal, to put our house back in order and turn our economy around.

During these last fifteen months the Government's emphasis on market forces, de-regulation, and a more open and international approach to economic policy has been paying off. The economy has turned around. Last year it grew by over four percent. More jobs were created last year than

any year in a decade -- over three hundred thousand. Wage settlements have held to between two and four percent while productivity has increased three percent. Inflation has been kept below four percent. Export growth has been strong. We have a healthy trade surplus. Investment was flat a year ago. It has increased by over twenty percent since. And, as the OECD has stated, the outlook for Canada in 1986 is second to none among the industrialized nations.

One of the more challenging tasks, I must say, has fallen to me, as Minister for International Trade. The challenge has been to secure and enhance our export markets in the face of rising protectionism in the world, and to keep Canada competitive in a rapidly changing world. Meeting that challenge has meant taking initiatives on a wide variety of fronts.

One of those fronts, of course, is the United States.

I am sure that you are aware of the initiative that Canada and the United States have taken to negotiate a new bilateral trade agreement. Some of you may even be concerned about it, perhaps fearing that it will divert our attention from the U.K., Europe and our other trading partners.

I assure you that it will not.

Let me go into this a bit. The United States is by far our biggest market. It takes three-quarters of our exports, which makes it a customer we must pay attention to. And of course we are paying attention to it. We have proposed -- and the U.S. administration has wholeheartedly endorsed -- that we undertake a round of wide-ranging bilateral trade negotiations. The matter is now before Congress, and we expect the negotia-