

trade agreement and ought to provide some assurance that these concerns are being addressed.

Beyond that, however, no one is more conscious than Mexicans of the need to improve their environment: they are the ones who have to breathe Mexico City's polluted air. My experience with Mexico in the course of these negotiations is that they are concerned about the state of their environment and wish to make it better. They have set high standards. They have expanded their capacity to enforce them. Canada is also making a contribution to this effort through a program of environmental co-operation that focuses on enforcement. We are trying to help, but we and the Mexicans believe the best way to contribute to improvement of the Mexican environment is to promote economic development. With a stronger economy, Mexico can devote more resources to preserving and improving its environment.

Although Canadians have frequently expressed concern about the wage and environment issues in these negotiations, the majority of Canadians appear to agree on one thing: Canada must be at the table to defend our interests.

I regret that this common sense view is not shared by the premiers of Ontario and British Columbia. In the last few weeks, they have both officially declared themselves opposed to the NAFTA negotiations and have urged us to abandon them because the U.S. is behaving badly. I can not, in good conscience, take their advice.

Let me make it very clear. We are at the NAFTA negotiating table not as a favour to the Mexicans, but to pursue Canadian interests. We see advantages to be gained for Canada in a possible agreement.

I find Premier Harcourt's position particularly contradictory. Mr. Harcourt has endorsed the concept of a free trade zone for the Western Hemisphere, yet he advises us to pull out of what could be the key building block for such an arrangement. Mr. Harcourt is interested in the new markets for B.C. goods and services. He's interested in new investment for his province. I know he's interested in contributing to the economic and social development of all the Americas. If he is truly committed to a western hemispheric trading relationship, he would support Canada's NAFTA objectives. So we are at the table now in order to influence the Western Hemisphere trading bloc to the maximum extent possible. We certainly will not have much influence after the relationship is built by others.

All Canada's premiers are frustrated by the unrelenting pressure of U.S. trade actions, as are we, but these are a fact of life we have to live with. The United States' trade deficit with the rest of the world has contributed significantly to protectionist