

So you might ask: "What are you doing about them?"

In March 1992, the First Ministers agreed on the need to accelerate the removal of internal barriers. To this end, they instructed the Committee of Ministers on Internal Trade to complete the work they had already been pursuing by March 31, 1995. Federal and provincial Ministers of Internal Trade have already agreed to open up bidding on most major procurement of goods for government departments. We have also produced an agreement on the sale of beer. But much more remains to be done if we are to deal with remaining barriers by 1995.

Canadian Ministers of Internal Trade are committed to meeting this target. At our meeting in mid-March, we agreed to launch not sectoral, but comprehensive negotiations to reduce internal trade barriers, a sort of internal NAFTA, if you will. These negotiations are to produce an agreement by June 30, 1994, with ratification to follow. Chief negotiators will begin their meetings by early May to prepare an overall work plan, including negotiations in specific sectors. Ministers will meet again in June to assess and approve the plan and will meet periodically during the negotiations to review progress and to give direction.

The final agreement will implement the principle that governments will treat people, goods, services and capital equally, irrespective of where they originate in Canada. It will also include effective compliance and dispute settlement mechanisms. In their work, negotiators will take account of important factors such as the transparency of application, environmental and consumer protection concerns, labour standards and regional development objectives.

In all of this, you, too, have a crucial role to play. You must ensure that all levels of government know about your interest in a single integrated Canadian market. You must let them know about the costs that you are bearing as a result of these barriers. In short, strong, clear and continuing views from the private sector are essential to this process.

I know that I can count on your continued interest and support.

Ontario is founded on a tradition of exporting and trade. The NAFTA provides even more opportunities to strengthen Ontario as Canada's export leader.

Thanks to the FTA, we have guaranteed and secure access to our best trading partner, the United States. We are fully confident that the NAFTA will be equally beneficial to Canada as a whole, and to Ontario in particular. With your help, all our trade-liberalizing efforts -- both international and domestic -- will lead to greater prosperity for all Canadians.

Thank you.