

Canadian exporters are enthusiastically using the binational panels to protect their commercial interests. For example, a recent panel decision ordered the United States International Trade Commission to reconsider its finding against Canadian pork producers.

We will no doubt continue to win some, and lose some. However, the future success of the binational panel system will not be measured by the number of cases Canadian exporters have won or lost. The system's real success will be gauged by the immeasurable number of actions that it prevents.

The government fought hard to get the FTA because we knew it was important to Canadian exporters and that it was the right thing to do.

You will recall that the unelected Senate refused to pass the FTA. So we fought an election to deliver the FTA's benefits. During that historic election, Canadian exporters took a stand and strongly supported the government's free trade initiative.

The business community took a public stand on the FTA because you thought it was vital to our national prosperity. The government won a majority and we delivered the FTA several weeks later.

The free trade debate forced Canadians to confront the issue of global competitiveness. After a vigorous national debate, the Canadian public voted for policies that will enable Canada to adapt to the competitive challenges of the global economy.

Recent events indicate that the Senate's attempt to block the FTA was not an isolated incident. An alarming pattern is emerging which I will discuss in further detail in my concluding remarks.

In addition to our GATT and FTA trade policy initiatives, we have recently announced another major undertaking.

In the August edition of your Association's official publication, there was an article that argued that Canada should participate in the Mexico free trade talks. We agree.

Last week I announced in the House of Commons that Canada will participate in discussions with Mexico and the United States to establish the basis for subsequent negotiations on a North American free trade arrangement.

The next day, your Association announced that it welcomed these discussions and declared: