

A dichotomy in our relation is that your every action is front page news in Canada, but our vital interests are barely noticed here. Of your neighbours, you pay far more attention to Nicaragua than to Canada. Let me say that we do not want the kind of attention you give Nicaragua.

And we recognize that it would be within your power to respond punitively and forcefully to any of the Canadian actions I have just hypothesized. It would be within your power, but not in your interest - profoundly not in your interest. Your interest, as ours, is in building upon the genuine friendship that flourishes on both sides of the forty-ninth parallel, and there is a unique opportunity to do just that.

Your President, and his Administration, have demonstrated a genuine interest in improving relations between Canada and the United States. President Reagan has taken tangible actions - some of them of historic consequence. In the last week alone, your officials agreed to a change in reporting trade statistics that will end a deep bias against Canada - and President Reagan has announced unprecedented action to fight the acid rain that we believe is so lethal to Canada and, indeed, to the USA.

The President has also - consistently, and most recently in the State of the Union address - personally encouraged the pursuit of a new trade agreement between Canada and the United States. At the leadership level, in both our countries, the atmosphere has never been better for making real progress together.

But presidents and prime ministers can't make history alone. They need the active support of citizens who share their conviction. For relations between Canada and the United States, the next ten months will be crucial.

One reason is trade. We have launched an historic initiative to negotiate a new trade arrangement between our two countries - to further reduce, or eliminate the tariffs that remain; to find better ways to deal with the rush of new non-tariff barriers; to expand our access to one another's market; and, not incidentally, to provide a model of trade cooperation to a world imperilled by protectionism.