

Mr. Chairman,

I am pleased to have this opportunity - a first for me - to address the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Annual Ministerial Session and to contribute some Canadian perceptions and objectives on trade issues.

As a result of the Secretary General's timely and constructive report, and in light of events still ahead, trade questions are of crucial significance this year.

It is no accident that, in a period of prolonged recession, uncertainties predominate. Fundamental values and basic guiding principles affecting trade are greeted with skepticism. Confidence - the most vital ingredient of all for a genuine economic recovery - is also proving to be the most elusive commodity at the moment.

In Canada we have seen unemployment rise from 7.3% in the first quarter of 1981 to 8.6% - an increase of 18% - in the first quarter of 1982. The April figures indicated a further increase to 9.6% on a seasonably adjusted basis. This is the highest rate for Canada since the Great Depression.

We have no monopoly on unemployment statistics such as these and I recognize that the concerns they generate in Canada about our capacity to recover, about the credibility and effectiveness of the open trading system and about the "fairness" of trading relationships are shared in many OECD countries.

Our Government is under strong pressure at home from business and labour to stem the flow of imports in certain sectors and to protect jobs. We recognize that our failure to resist such pressure would only make matters worse but it

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