

Ladies and gentlemen.

I want to congratulate you on your 94th anniversary. Few associations in this country can make that claim.

I also want to thank OGRA for giving me this opportunity to speak to you about the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

During the past three days, you have discussed ways of meeting the transportation challenge. You have dealt with highly technical issues, as well as with very basic and very real human issues.

International trade can also be a highly technical issue. But, in the final analysis, international trade concerns people and the quality of their lives. Three million Canadians and their families owe their livelihood to our ability to sell in markets outside this country.

We negotiated the Free Trade Agreement with the United States because free and secure access to that market is essential to our future as a trading nation.

To be competitive in any of the major markets of the world, our entrepreneurs and businesses must be able to base their operations on a market of well over 100 million people. The Free Trade Agreement provides us access to a market of 250 million people.

The Free Trade Agreement gives our businesses a fighting chance to be winners in the international marketplace.

Some people make the mistake of seeing the Agreement purely as a North American exercise. They criticize the Government for having economic tunnel vision.

In fact, our free trade initiative was born out of an entirely different perspective -- a global vision of Canada.

Not only does the Free Trade Agreement provide us with access to the North American market, it makes us an attractive centre for investment for foreign companies which wish to build on that secure access. Every day we read in the newspapers how other countries envy us our trade agreement with the U.S.

That envy will be translated into investment dollars.