

The most extreme solution would be to refuse to talk about any subject that might have any relation to any part of Canadian culture. That could stop us from seeking better markets for Canadian books or films; it might stop the export of Moosehead beer. It could lead to decisions in advance, that we take other large categories of questions off the table, leaving nothing to negotiate.

A more realistic approach I believe, is to indicate clearly Canada's cultural integrity and sovereignty and then to involve the cultural industries directly in the process of any relevant discussions, or any negotiations that might occur. That is what we are doing.

But, in addition, because of the unusual importance of the question, I am meeting in the next two weeks with representatives of Canada's cultural industries, months before any possible negotiations might begin, to discuss with them directly the best ways to guarantee and assert Canada's sovereignty, both in the context of any trade negotiations and elsewhere. My colleague, the Honourable Benoit Bouchard, the Acting Minister of Communications, is interested in this process and will also follow it closely. We see the American market as offering great opportunities to Canada's cultural industries, and we want to ensure that opportunity is seized.