

IT IS A PLEASURE TO BE WITH YOU TODAY AND WELCOME YOU TO MY OWN RIDING OF VANCOUVER CENTRE. ONE OF THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CANADIAN AND AMERICAN SYSTEMS OF GOVERNMENT IS THAT HERE, CABINET MINISTERS GET ELECTED FIRST AND BECOME MINISTERS SECOND.

SO, AS THE MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FOR VANCOUVER CENTRE RATHER THAN THE MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE, LET ME SAY HOW DELIGHTED I AM THAT YOUR ORGANIZATION CHOSE VANCOUVER FOR YOUR MEETING.

ON BEHALF OF MY CONSTITUENTS, I HOPE YOU HAVE BEEN ENJOYING YOUR STAY IN, IF I DO SAY SO, NORTH AMERICA'S MOST BEAUTIFUL CITY.

YOU COULDN'T HAVE PICKED A MORE EXCITING TIME FOR YOUR VISIT AS OUR TWO NATIONS EMBARK ON AN HISTORIC VOYAGE TOWARDS THE LARGEST FREE TRADE DEAL EVER PUT TOGETHER BETWEEN TWO NATIONS.

OUR ECONOMY IN CANADA IS DEPENDENT ON TRADE TO A GREATER DEGREE THAN ALMOST ANY OTHER COUNTRY. TODAY WE EXPORT ABOUT ONE-THIRD OF ALL WE PRODUCE AND WE IMPORT ABOUT 30 PER CENT OF WHAT WE CONSUME. GROWTH IN TRADE TRANSLATES INTO GROWTH IN ECONOMIC WEALTH. FOR THE FIRST FORTY YEARS SINCE THE POST-WAR WORLD FIRST ADOPTED THE INTERNATIONAL RULES OF THE GENERAL AGREEMENT ON TARIFS AND TRADE, CANADA'S EXPORTS HAVE MULTIPLIED 10 TIMES OVER AND OUR NATIONAL WEALTH HAS MORE THAN TRIPLED.

OUR TRADE WITH EACH OTHER - BY FAR THE LARGEST IN THE WORLD - PROVIDES PAY CHEQUES FOR 2-MILLION WORKERS IN EACH OF OUR COUNTRIES.

THAT TRADE BRINGS PROSPERITY IS NOTHING NEW. FROM THE EARLIEST DAYS OF MANKIND, FROM THE ERA OF BARTER SYSTEMS THROUGH TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FIRST GREAT TRADE ROUTES, TRADE HAS BEEN THE GENERATOR OF GROWTH.

CITIES SPRANG UP WHERE TRADERS MET TO EXCHANGE GOODS AND ALL THE WORLD'S GREAT CITIES HAVE THEIR ORIGINS IN TRADE.