

CANADA IS FACED WITH THE NECESSITY OF MAKING A CHOICE THAT WILL SUBSTANTIALLY AFFECT NATIONAL WELFARE FOR GENERATIONS TO COME.

THE CANADIAN BUSINESS COMMUNITY HAS A CRUCIAL STAKE IN THIS CHOICE. IT COMES DOWN TO A DECISION WHETHER CANADIAN BUSINESS SHOULD SEEK THE OPPORTUNITY AND CHALLENGE NOW PRESENTED OF SECURING AND ENHANCING ITS ACCESS TO A COMBINED MARKET OF 270 MILLION OR WHETHER IT IS PREPARED TO FACE THE VERY REAL RISK OF RESTRICTED ACCESS TO A MARKET VITAL TO ITS PROSPERITY.

THERE ARE THOSE WHO ARE SAYING THAT CANADA OR THE UNITED STATES GOT THE BETTER OF THE FREE TRADE DEAL. IN THE UNITED STATES, SOME IMPORTANT INTERESTS ARE ARGUING THAT THE UNITED STATES GOT THE WORST OF THE DEAL IN MARITIME TRANSPORTATION, IN ENERGY, IN AGRICULTURE, OR IN THE AUTO SECTOR. EQUALLY, SOME CANADIANS ARE CLAIMING THAT CANADA HAS BEEN OUT-NEGOTIATED.

LET ME SAY, AS ONE WHO HAS BEEN INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN CANADA-UNITED STATES TRADE RELATIONS FOR MORE THAN A DECADE NOW, THAT IN MY OPINION THIS AGREEMENT IS BALANCED, FAIR AND IN THE OVERALL INTEREST OF BOTH COUNTRIES. THOSE WHO SAY THAT THE UNITED STATES