

Just a week ago, the Prime Minister returned from the meeting of NATO Heads of Government in Brussels, where he reaffirmed the Canadian defence commitment that makes us part of European security. Countries that value freedom have to act together to protect it, and that is why this Government has increased Canada's commitment to NATO in Brussels. The Prime Minister also met with the President of the European Commission, Jacques de Lors. That was the first such meeting between a Canadian Prime Minister and the President of the Commission of the European Communities in the last decade. There have been frequent bilateral visits and exchanges at the Ministerial level with Italy. The last western Economic Summit was in Venice last year. The next is in Toronto in June. Canada is involved along with Italy in a full, ongoing process of collective economic coordination through the Economic Summit, the OECD, meetings of Ministers, not to mention international financial institutions, and the GATT. The pace and warmth of these dealings has seen a notable increase in recent years.

Most of you know the important role which Canada played at the Punta del Este meeting in 1986 which launched the new round of multilateral trade negotiations under the GATT. Towards the end of this year we are expecting to host in Montreal a Ministerial meeting of all of the countries participating in that new GATT Round, to review progress and see how to move forward. This is a very ambitious undertaking. There are a record number of countries taking part, over ninety, which represent every level of development, and many types of trade regimes. The negotiations cover a wider range of subjects than ever before, and will have to take account of a great many existing intergovernmental arrangements. One key element to the success of the negotiations will be the attitude of Europe. Europe hopes to have its internal barriers removed by 1992. What will Europe do about its external barriers? Will it bring them down at the same time? Will it reach outward, or look inward? It is our belief, on the Canadian side, that broadly-based freer trade can work, if all parties try to make it work. That, in the view of the Mulroney Government, is the challenge for Canada in the decade to come.