

I want you to know that I don't usually talk at dances. In fact, the band only agreed to let me in front of a microphone on the condition that I promise not to sing. I promise.

I also promise that I won't be up here very long, because in my opinion anybody who would rather listen to a speech than dance is missing the beat somewhere. But Frank made it very clear to me that he expects me to speak, and I never question his judgment. Besides, I have some things to talk to you about.

The subject obviously is trade. Specifically, it's the initiative we have taken to explore the scope and prospects of a new trade agreement with the United States. I want to put this initiative in context, and tell you why we have taken it and what we hope to gain.

For you as exporters, trade means business. For Canada as a whole, trade means growth, and growth means jobs. The economic well-being of all Canadians depends on our ability to sell our products and services in the markets of the world.

Your interests, in other words, coincide with Canada's interests, and your Government in Ottawa knows that very very well. In the year this government has

been in office, we have been moving quickly and decisively to improve Canada's trade performance.

We have undertaken three major export promotion campaigns, including Market-place 85 back in March and Canada Export Trade Month, which is going on around us right now.

We have worked with the governments of all ten of Canada's provinces to put in place a national trade strategy. It will provide, among other things, better coordination between the federal and provincial governments, more provincial representation in our trade offices abroad, and a data base that can provide exporters up-to-date information on export markets and opportunities around the world.

Trade was a very important part of the First Ministers Conference in Regina in February, and it will be on their docket again in Halifax next month.

We took a major step forward at the Quebec City Summit Meeting, where our Prime Minister and the President of the United States agreed that our two countries should do all in our power to reduce the trade barriers between us. And since then, I have spent literally months consulting with Canadians of all walks of life and in all parts of