

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. It is a real pleasure for me to be here in Seattle today. Coming from Vancouver as I do, I consider being in Washington State the next best thing to being back home.

Congressmen AuCoin, Morrison, Smith and Swift share the honour with me of representing the West in our respective federal governments.

As Westerners, as Pacific neighbours, we share a special community and a special community of interest.

There is a natural North-South flow of trade and tourism here in the West that takes advantage of proximity, similar business practices, common language, climate, time zones and lifestyle. It has created what I consider to be a special bond among those of us in the West.

As you all know, this year Seattle commemorates the 25th anniversary of its World Fair. One short year ago, Vancouver was the site of Expo '86. Both events demonstrated the spirit of co-operation which exists in the Pacific Northwest as people from both sides of the border contributed to the success of these World Fairs.

The U.S.-Canada free trade agreement will help us to develop further this strong community of interest. It will open up an array of new economic opportunities and bring the Pacific Northwest a new wave of economic expansion and prosperity.

The significance of this agreement cannot be overstated. It makes three major contributions to international trade. First, it represents a sizeable expansion of trade between the world's two largest trading partners. The agreement is unprecedented in terms of volume and trade affected as well as the scope of commercial relations covered.

Second, the agreement sets our trading relationship on a more secure and productive path, taking us from a patchwork of ad hoc arrangements to a comprehensive set of bilateral trade rules, based on equality and partnership.

Third, it will serve both our countries well in our efforts to liberalize trade with our other partners in the general agreement on tariffs and trade. To the 95 countries involved in the GATT negotiations in Geneva, Canada and the U.S. will show that trading partners can find solutions to even the most complex problems when there is strong political will to find those solutions.