

For half a century Canada has pursued consistently a policy of trade liberalization. Today more than ever, our prosperity, and that of our partners, depends on an expanding world trade and a growing world economy. In all of the forums where Canada is present, we are working to remove impediments to trade, aid, investment and development on a global basis.

In particular we are playing a leading role in promoting and preparing for a new round of multilateral trade negotiations in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). We are consulting the less-developed countries on issues of common concern; and we emphatically support their participation in the negotiations.

No responsible person anywhere today advocates protectionism as a national economic strategy. Yet, sector by sector, region by region, country by country, Canada included, there persists the impulse to protectionism, whenever the going gets tough. Protectionist measures are always advocated as exceptional cases. But the barriers grow more numerous, more ingenious and more insidious all the time. Sometimes these measures are aimed directly at Canadian products or services; often they are aimed at others, but catch us in the process.

The motive may be laudable. The effect may be incremental. But in any over-all reckoning, protectionist measures are always self-defeating. This impulse to protectionism is defensive and negative — yet entirely understandable in human terms. This is what we are up against.

Economics, geography, common sense and the national interest dictate that we try to secure and expand our trade with our closest and largest trading partner. To do so is fully consistent with our commitment to freer trade on a multilateral basis. Of course any new agreement between Canada and the USA would have to meet the test of our overriding obligations under the GATT.

Five decades ago, national governments turned inward to shield their peoples from economic distress. Ultimately, protectionism proved suicidal. It brought on the Great Depression with all of its attendant misery.

The government will be pursuing clear goals in our talks with the USA. We are two sovereign democracies, sharing the same continent and reaching out with maturity and strength to seek out ways of enhancing mutually beneficial trade goals is an honourable course of action.

The need to secure our access to the USA market was the dominant theme of representations made in all parts of the country to the Minister for International Trade during his extensive consultations during last spring and summer. The same message was heard by the Senate-House of Commons Committee which reported in late August. Honourable members will have taken note of the conclusions of the Macdonald Commission together with, I think, its impressive analysis and documentation.

Canadians will also be very aware of the strong representations on trade which have been made by their provincial premiers over the past several months. I have taken care, and shall continue to take special care, as I did this afternoon by speaking personally with all of the provincial premiers in advance, to

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