

(Ladies and) Gentlemen:

It is an honour and a privilege for me to be here this evening. The C.M.A. represents one of the most vital, and certainly one of the liveliest, sectors of Canada's economy. Somebody has even told me that you share my interest in international trade.

I'm not here this evening to preach to the converted. Any group that sells 40% of its products abroad is well aware of the importance to Canada of being a successful trading nation. What I thought you might be interested in, however, are my impressions of the international trading environment, where we stand now as a trading nation, and what lies ahead of us in the months to come. I believe I can predict with some confidence that the months ahead are going to be very active ones, for the promotion of international trade is a top priority of this government.

Those of you who are out in the market are well aware of how tough it is out there. Despite the real progress that has been achieved under the GATT, international trade is far from free.