

Let me start by listing ten reasons why this agreement makes very good sense for Canada.

First, Canada's system of social programs and national institutions - that system we are all very proud of - it's not just a question of pride. That system is also very expensive. You don't have it unless you have a strong and growing economy. It requires a prosperous economy to maintain the kind of society and set of institutions we have developed in this country. In order to maintain that prosperity, we simply have to trade.

One of the realities is that, of the seven industrialized countries that will come to Toronto next June for the International Economic Summit, only one depends upon trade more than Canada. Only West Germany depends on trade more than we do for its economy to prosper. In other words, the United States depends less on trade than Canada does. Japan depends less on trade than Canada does. So does France; so does Britain; so does Italy. We are uniquely a nation that depends upon trade for growth. If we want to maintain those characteristics that define this country - our social programs, our cultural programs, our strength and our reputation as a nation where opportunity can be pursued - then we have to grow. If we want to grow, we have to trade. There is no escaping that elemental reality about this country.

As all Canadians know, while that is the necessity that faces us squarely in the eye, the other reality that is developing around the world is the blossoming of the growth of protectionism. If you don't know about it, ask anybody in the lumber business; ask anybody raising hogs; ask anybody in any of the industries that have been faced with the threat of protectionism from the United States over the last several years.

One of the great advantages of the trade agreement entered into between Canada and the United States is that it turns the tide against protectionism. You will remember that it was initialled very late on a Saturday night. As it happened, the following Sunday I received at the airport in Ottawa the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia who was coming here on official business. As Prince Saud came down the steps of the aircraft, he said to me, thank you. I said, thank you for what? He said, thank you for signing that agreement with the United States, because we have all be threatened by American protectionism. Saudi Arabia as much as Canada. If they could not conclude an agreement to lower trade barriers between Canada and the United States that would have encouraged inexorably those forces of protectionism in a way that would have hurt the whole world.