

Benefits for All Canadians

This is the most important trade agreement Canada has ever concluded. It is the culmination of almost 100 years of Canadian efforts to secure open and stable markets.

Canadians earn their living through trade. Over 30 percent of the national income comes from trade; more than three million Canadian jobs depend on trade; farmers, fishermen, manufacturers and service companies in many sectors depend on trade. The trading rules which determine whether markets are open or closed, whether there are customs duties, quotas, restrictions of every sort, are critically important to Canadian prosperity.

Canadians know how important trade is to the country and the living standards it provides to its hard-working citizens. Canadians understand that in a competitive world, where the traditional basis of our wealth -- our fisheries, our farms, our natural resources, our manufacturing is changing; they need to change too. They know how important it is that the trading rules be fair to small countries as well as large countries. They know that small countries need to have a say in what the rules are and how they are enforced.

In Western Canada, the Agreement builds on the work already begun with the creation of the Western Diversification Agency. The gains will be solid, especially in the expansion of the petrochemical industry, more open markets for oil, gas, uranium, potash, forest products, fish, cattle exports, and better access to U.S. manufactured goods. After all, the U.S. is the West's largest trading partner. According to research done for the Canada West Foundation, nearly 60 percent of the region's exports, worth over \$12 billion in 1986, go to sixteen states. Nearly half of those exports are from the oil and gas sector where entry is now secure.

For British Columbians, it will mean that their forest products, which account for 45 percent of exports, will now have more secure access to the United States. Over time, the penalties imposed by the U.S. on shakes and shingles will disappear. To ensure that manufacturing of forest products continues to take place in Canada, the export controls on logs currently in place will be retained. The future of hydro-electric exports is more secure. Earlier this year, the provincial government announced the removal of membership restrictions on its provincially-regulated securities firms. The