

Statements by Ministers

market. It creates a code unlike any other yet in existence which will govern the rules of the road for our service industries. It phases in reduction of trade barriers to ensure that our workers and our firms have all the time required to gear up for the opportunities in the changed environment and to protect workers against dislocation that inevitably occurs as society changes.

• (1110)

It is an agreement that gives new assurance to our resource producers in the Maritimes and western Canada, and increases opportunities for business in central Canada.

This agreement, Mr. Speaker, will lead to lower prices for consumers and higher real wages for Canadian workers.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: As the Economic Council of Canada and other authoritative bodies have predicted, the agreement will also lead to a significant number of new and durable jobs. The council, in its most recent report, referred to some 350,000 new jobs in Canada resulting from such an agreement.

This is something, Mr. Speaker, which promises such benefit and such hope to the youth of Canada and to our regions of Canada. If Canada is to remain united and to prosper, equality must be the hallmark; there must be fairness and growth from Newfoundland to British Columbia, and this provides our regions with a unique opportunity to share in the growing wealth of Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mulroney: The challenge from the Canadian perspective is what it always is and always has been, to reconcile regional interests and sectoral concerns with the national interest.

The trade initiative was launched by this Government with no guarantees, no indications that success was guaranteed, not by a long shot. We indicated that to the House before we began. Such an undertaking was recommended in 1985, following great study and reflection, as a vital national concern by a royal commission chaired by a distinguished Canadian, the Hon. Donald S. Macdonald. In the process, and pursuant to a splendid report by Mr. Macdonald and his colleagues, we reached out to Canadians from every walk of life, from every corner of our country.

I have met with the Premiers no less than eight times, meetings that have extended up to seven, eight, and nine hours. I will again meet with them later this week to brief them on the outcome of the negotiations and to seek their views.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, last Friday, when we were starting the final and crucial round of negotiations, Canada's Premiers informed us directly of their confidence in our approach and our

strategy since the beginning of our trade negotiations with the United States.

The First Ministers' Conference, formerly an occasion for sterile confrontation, has become a forum for effective co-operation, conducted with the interest of all Canadians in mind.

I want to thank all the Premiers for their solidarity and support throughout this difficult process.

From start to finish, Canada has maintained a united front. We closed ranks on all crucial issues and settled our differences privately, although there were the usual mishaps and communications problems.

Mr. Speaker, I shall table the complete text of the Agreement as soon as the wording is finalized. It will then be referred to the appropriate committee of the House for analysis, study and debate.

[*English*]

Meanwhile, today, I am tabling the "Elements of the Agreement" concluded and signed by representatives of both Governments. I am advised that there may be a minor typographical error in this document, but that the document itself represents the fundamentals of the agreement arrived at by the parties.

These elements are the agreed basis for the agreement and will be translated into a legal document, as agreed, in appropriate time frames by the negotiating teams.

[*Translation*]

The Ministers and the members of the Canadian negotiating team will be glad to help the standing committee in its work. They will appear before the parliamentary committee, and Members will, of course, have every opportunity to consider the contents of the Agreement in the House. In the House of Commons there will be a special debate on this question that is of major importance to us all.

Mr. Speaker, we have put in place a host of mechanisms for consultation between the Government and the private sector, and it seems to me that the latter is becoming an important factor in the conduct of public affairs.

[*English*]

We created, for example, the International Trade Advisory Committee, calling on the acknowledged expertise of leading Canadians in fields of important national endeavour. We created 15 sectoral advisory groups, to assure ourselves that the concerns of all Canadians in all of the vital areas of our national life were reflected at all times, to the best extent humanly possible, in the negotiating process.

Literally hundreds of Canadians, under the brilliant over-all chairmanship of Walter Light, participated directly in this worthy endeavour. This represents another indication of a fundamental approach to the manner in which public policy is developed and articulated in Canada. I think it is a beneficial