

They see economic change on a global scale, and they wonder how these changes will affect them. They're concerned about their jobs, about their families, and about the opportunities that await their children.

What I see is a real desire for honest talk, realistic proposals, and solutions to our problems. To pretend that we can retreat behind artificial walls and hide from change is not honest, nor realistic, nor viable.

A retreat to the past may be nostalgic. It may provide a brief, illusory sense of security, but in 1993 you can't successfully navigate the uncertain road ahead if you spend your time looking longingly into the rear-view mirror.

The North American Free Trade Agreement will lend powerful impetus to our safe passage along that road. The potential economic, social and environmental benefits for all three countries are enormous. As key members of the Canadian and U.S. business communities, I know you recognize the promise this Agreement offers for greater growth and for more dynamic markets in North America.

As Canadian business people have told me many times, you don't build either a successful business or a great country by trying to hide from the competition. If you believe in your product -- and in yourself -- you meet the competition head on. All you need is a clear set of rules and a referee who is fair and impartial.

Few industrialized countries depend more on international trade than Canada. Trade pushed back the frontiers on the northern half of the continent and it provides the greatest hope that our children can have the dignity and quality of life that come from gainful employment.

Those who believe in Canada know that our future depends on facing the reality of international trade, investment and technology, not on turning our backs to the world. The future belongs to those who have vision and courage, not to those who are short-sighted and timid.

That's the great difference you see when you talk to young Canadians today. They know who they are. They're not interested in old and sterile debates about who a Canadian is. They're confident of themselves and they're proud of their country. They know that they can compete with the best the world has to offer.

There is one message I want to leave with you today: there is simply no going back to the past. The only issue Canadians -- and Americans -- must decide is whether or not we are prepared to