

## CANADA AND GLOBAL FOOD ISSUES

I AM PLEASED TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK TO THE GRAINS COUNCIL TODAY. GIVEN THAT THE THEME OF YOUR TWO-DAY MEETING IS TRANSPORTATION AND THE GRAIN INDUSTRY, WITH THE MAIN FOCUS ON THE ATLANTIC RIM, I THINK IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE FOR ME TO LOOK BRIEFLY AT SOME OF THE MAJOR ISSUES YOU ARE DISCUSSING AND RELATE THEM TO OUR FOREIGN POLICY AND CANADA'S CONTRIBUTION TO INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO TACKLE THE GLOBAL PROBLEMS OF PRODUCTION AND DISTRIBUTION OF FOOD.

I DON'T NEED TO REMIND YOU OF THE IMPORTANCE OF GRAIN IN WESTERN CANADA - TO YOU, TO WESTERN CANADA, TO CANADA AS A WHOLE, AND TO OTHER COUNTRIES. IN ECONOMIC TERMS, THE GRAINS AND OILSEEDS INDUSTRY IS THE THIRD LARGEST CONTRIBUTOR TO OUR BALANCE OF PAYMENTS - OVER \$6 BILLION LAST YEAR. IT STRENGTHENS THE CANADIAN ECONOMY, SUPPORTS THE VALUE OF THE DOLLAR AND IS ONE OF THE MAINSTAYS OF OUR PROSPERITY. THE GRAINS INDUSTRY ITSELF IS CHARACTERIZED BY A BIT OF EVERYTHING - ECONOMICS, DOMESTIC POLITICS, INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIES, SCIENCE, THE WEATHER, COMMODITY SPECULATION - AND HARD WORK. UNDERLYING THESE SHORT-TERM FACTORS YOU ARE DAILY REMINDED OF, ARE THE LONGER-TERM CONCERNS OF FUTURE DEMAND FOR FOOD AND THE CAPACITY OF THE WORLD AND ESPECIALLY EXPORTING NATIONS SUCH AS CANADA TO RESPOND.

VIRTUALLY EVERY ASPECT OF YOUR LIVES IS TOUCHED ONE WAY OR ANOTHER BY THE IMPACT OF DEVELOPMENTS ELSEWHERE. THE INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN OR ECONOMIC REFUGEES IN AFRICA ALL HAVE