

MR. SPEAKER, TODAY IS MY FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO SPEAK IN THIS HOUSE IN MY NEW CAPACITY AS THE MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE. BEFORE COMMENCING MY REMARKS, HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO EXTEND MY PERSONAL CONGRATULATIONS TO YOU ON YOUR ELECTION AS SPEAKER. THE HOUSE HAS CHOSEN WELL, AND I KNOW THAT I SPEAK ON BEHALF OF ALL BRITISH COLUMBIANS AND INDEED, ALL CANADIANS, WHEN I WISH YOU ALL THE BEST AS YOU UNDERTAKE YOUR NEW RESPONSIBILITIES.

MR. SPEAKER, JUST OVER ONE WEEK AGO, HER EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR GENERAL OUTLINED THIS GOVERNMENT'S AGENDA FOR ACTION OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS. THAT AGENDA IS DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE FOUR GOALS:

- NATIONAL RECONCILIATION;
- CONTINUING ECONOMIC RENEWAL;
- ENHANCED SOCIAL JUSTICE; AND
- CONSTRUCTIVE PARTICIPATION IN GLOBAL AFFAIRS

THESE GOALS ARE LINKED AND ARE MUTUALLY REINFORCING.

NATIONAL RECONCILIATION - GIVING CANADIANS A NATIONAL SENSE OF PURPOSE - IS AN ESSENTIAL PRECONDITION TO ECONOMIC RENEWAL, SINCE WE CAN HARDLY COMPETE ABROAD IF WE DO NOT COOPERATE AT HOME.

ECONOMIC RENEWAL, IN TURN CAN INCREASE OUR ABILITY TO MAKE SOCIAL PROGRESS. IT WILL GIVE US THE MEANS TO FINANCE DESIRABLE SOCIAL AND CULTURAL PROGRAMS AND TO ENHANCE OUR QUALITY OF LIFE.

AND IF WE CAN ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF BECOMING A MORE UNITED, PROSPEROUS AND PROGRESSIVE SOCIETY, WE WILL BE BETTER ABLE TO TAKE UP OUR INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES AND PLAY A CONSTRUCTIVE ROLE IN THE GLOBAL COMMUNITY.

MR. SPEAKER, AS ALL MEMBERS KNOW, TRADE WILL PLAY A VITAL ROLE IN ACHIEVING THESE GOALS, JUST AS IT HAS DONE OVER THE ENTIRE SPAN OF OUR CONFEDERATION. OUR TRADE POLICY IS BASED ON AN ASSESSMENT OF GLOBAL TRADING PATTERNS AND ON THE RECOGNITION OF HISTORICAL CHANGE. MOREOVER, IT IS BASED UPON THE NEED TO SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES TO ADVANCE THE NATIONAL INTEREST.