

Some critics have argued that our participation in the FTA and the NAFTA means that we are turning our back on the GATT and the multilateral trading system. If this were true, would my predecessor Michael Wilson have gone to so much trouble to get his counterparts to Toronto in May in an effort to find a way to restart the Uruguay Round talks? In fact, the best rebuttal of this charge was offered by the former GATT Director General Arthur Dunkel when he said that "multilateralism and regionalism can coexist; better, they actually reinforce one another."

Canada has not turned its back on the multilateral trading system. The successful conclusion to the Uruguay Round has always been and will remain Canada's top trade priority. However, negotiations among 3 countries will usually be easier to complete than those among 110.

While the report on market-opening measures that we gave to the G-7 leaders at the Tokyo Summit does not constitute the final Uruguay Round deal, it is a very large step in the right direction. As I have said in the past, nothing is decided until everything is decided. The detailed negotiations among all GATT members will begin now and must be completed this fall in Geneva.

A far-reaching and balanced deal on breaking down barriers to markets for both goods and services is an important part of a comprehensive Uruguay Round deal. Such a deal would include more equitable rules, covering agriculture, improved trade rules, a stronger dispute-settlement mechanism and arrangements for a multilateral trade organization.

In the course of the next few months, Canadian negotiators will be pursuing this important agreement. Certainly the leaders of the G-7 countries agree that there can be no more significant step in stimulating the world economy than to reach a comprehensive settlement of the Uruguay Round.

The Canadian government will be doing its utmost to see that agreement is reached. The Canadian public expects economic leadership; we are going to continue to provide it.

By strengthening the foundation of the world's trade highways, Canadians can become more competitive. We can sell and buy more goods and services, and we can add to the prosperity of all Canadians. This is our goal. We will pursue it with conviction and determination.

Thank you.