Hon. Pat Carney (Minister for International Trade)

"Canadians want to compete openly in a larger market with clear rules and fair access and that is the kind of agreement we are pursuing."

As Atlantic fishermen, Quebec aerospace workers, Ontario steel workers, prairie farmers and British Columbia woodworkers know, we must trade to survive let alone to prosper and we are now fighting the ugliest outbreak of protectionism in the U.S. and around the world since the 1930s. We are fighting for those three million Canadians holding a quarter of Canadian jobs whose pay cheques depend on trade. We are fighting for a secure future and for more jobs in the years ahead.

American Congressmen and politicians are concerned about their trade deficit. For the first time in their memory, Americans are buying more from abroad than they are selling and they are losing jobs to overseas competition. They are turning inward, turning away from what gave them the strongest economy and the highest standard of living in the world. They are using all sorts of weapons at their disposal, raising all kinds of non-tariff barriers to stop imports in the mistaken belief they can maintain jobs through protectionism.

In the last seven years, Americans have launched some 40 actions against Canadian goods. Many have failed but those that have succeeded have penalized Canadian exports worth over $6.5 billion. No region of Canada has remained untouched by American trade actions against us. These actions have cost Canadians opportunities and jobs.

There are no signs of weakening in the protectionist mood. There are hundreds of protectionist Bills awaiting action in the Congress. That mood should convince even the most skeptical Canadians that our trading relationship with the Americans is under attack. The new trade Bill would resume that attack if we are unsuccessful in our trade negotiations.

Let me deal with the agenda of the trade talks. We were asked this morning to specify the agenda. We have done so before but we are more than willing to do so again. First let me stress what is not on the table. Regional development and our capacity to sustain regional development is not on the table. Only the opposition Parties are dragging it onto the table. Our cultural policies and our ability to protect our national identity is not on the table. The negotiators know that that is not a subject for negotiation. Only the opposition Parties keep dragging it onto the table. Our social programs are not on the table. Again, only the opposition Parties raise our social programs and try to drag them onto the negotiating table. They are trying to put culture, regional development and social programs on the table, we are not.