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sense. But I do not apologize for introducing a little common sense to international dealings by Canada. You see, Mr. Speaker, when you get some kind of arrangement with our major customer it makes a lot of things possible.

Let us go back to our company again. A long time agreement on sales opportunities allows our company, Canada, to plan ahead with more confidence. It is able to buy raw materials in larger quantities and save some money. Assured sales may allow extra money to be spent on research or on planned expansion. A number of positive benefits derive from knowing the rules of the sales game with the number one customer. There is a direct analogy between the company and the Canada-U.S. trade talks.

Let me emphasize that these are trade talks. It is of vital importance to Canadian exporters that they know the rules of the game for the future. The only way they can know the rules of the game in future dealings with the United States is if the Government of Canada sits down with the United States and works out those rules. What effective trade talks do is to blaze the trail ahead. It is the proper job of Government to be in the lead blazing that trail so that businesses coming along behind can walk with confidence, creating the jobs we need by selling more goods and services.

If one wants to complete the analogy, or at least round it off, we can do that by asking what our company would do to increase sales besides talking and working with the number one customer. The answer is clear. The company would talk to other customers, old and new, and make every effort to get the rules of the game settled with them as well. Of course that is precisely what Canada is doing as we prepare for the next round of GATT discussions, the Canada-world trade talks. We will be sitting down to talk with potential customers from around the world. Again, as with the case of the Canada-U.S. trade talks, it will be the job of our Government to blaze the trail, to make sure that the route to prosperity is clearly marked for Canadian exporters to give them a certain amount of confidence in what is going on.

It is hard for me to imagine that any Canadian would be against the idea of talking to any of our customers, let alone our best customer, about setting some rules for the future. That is necessary, yet the fact of today's debate being requested suggests that at least those Canadians who are in the opposition Parties are against talking to our customers, or at least they must declare themselves against such talks.

I wonder why they worry so much. Talks are not a risky proposition. Any politician knows that there are no bad questions, just bad answers. A business person will tell you that there are no bad sales discussions, just bad deals. The point is that Canada is not sitting down to talk either at the world talks or the U.S. talks with a requirement to come out with a deal at any cost. On the contrary. If Canada cannot make a deal which works to the benefit of Canada and which is good for us, there will be no deal. That is the clear statement of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney).

We are going into these talks hopefully to buy insurance in a sense, but if the cost is too high, then we will not buy. Surely the worry cannot be because Canada is new to trade talks. That cannot be a worry. Trade is the longest single thread in our cultural fabric. Canada has always been a trading nation. We have relied on trade to build a nation of which we are proud. Now the nation must be proud of its traders. If we are proud of our traders' ability to compete, then we will certainly want to get right at the job of talking to the United States and others into lowering trade barriers so that our traders have a chance to compete on an equal basis.

Canadian traders are as fine as any businessmen in the world. We have to give them the opportunity to trade more. We have to knock down some of the walls that exist between Canada and the United States. I wonder if in Ontario, Quebec, the Maritimes, Atlantic Canada they have contemplated what it would mean if the total northeastern United States were open to trade. That is a market several times the size of all Canada. Coming from British Columbia in western Canada, we look at California, a market larger than all of Canada. If anyone thinks that British Columbia manufacturers cannot compete up and down the Pacific Coast without anything coming out of eastern Canada or the eastern United States, just look at the distances. Free trade, not necessarily, but enhanced trade very definitely is what is required. Let us give our business people the great opportunities they need. The time to go after these agreements is now. The sooner we have the trade talks the better. With the recent example of what has happened to Canada, to 4,000 people in British Columbia particularly with shakes and shingles, all I can say is that it is a pity these talks did not begin five years ago. If they had, perhaps we would not have these particular countervailing pressures right now. Certainly for the future of Canada these talks are vital.

For a country to build on trade and not to plan to continue as a world leader in trade would be denying our birthright. Canada is trade, and trade is very definitely Canada. While we will probably outsell our competitors in product by product and service by service, I hope we will continue the Canadian tradition of exporting ideas and humanity and surely as well—because I believe Canada has earned for itself a good reputation abroad—that is only partly the result of effective sales efforts. We are known as good people with whom to do business. In many countries that also means we are simply good people. We can be good traders too. It is a good reputation to have. While we certainly want to compete with all the vigour we can summon, we want always to be known as good people to do business with, good people to talk to. Of course, if we are to represent Canadian business at the trade talks, we must in turn be able to talk with Canadian business and labour. That is why we have established a continuing consultant and discussion structure second to none in the world. In all of the trade talks, our Government negotiators will be guided, and remember this, by ongoing discussions with representatives of every economic sector.