

Mr. Chairman,

It is a pleasure for me to be here. Before we proceed with your questions, I would like to make a brief opening statement. In his third appearance before this committee, I understand that Ambassador Ritchie has just reviewed with you the highlights of the final text released last week. I would like to take a few moments to tell you why I believe that the proposed trade agreement is good for Canada.

The agreement reached on October 3 and released last week meets the needs of Canada's resource, agricultural, fishing, manufacturing and service industries. It is far-reaching and innovative. It builds on the past and is responsive to special needs. It is consistent with our GATT obligations. It provides time for adjustment. It preserves certain programs and policies where Canada wished to retain freedom of action, such as those providing for marketing boards and supply management in the agricultural sector, for regional development incentives, for our cultural policies and programs and, of course, our network of social support programs.

This agreement will create a whole new environment in which Canadians work and live. It will create new opportunities for jobs. It will encourage application of more advanced technology. It will increase the incomes Canadians earn. It will encourage Canadians to seek their futures in Canada and attract the best from abroad. In general, it will create a positive, constructive kind of environment with new opportunities for expansion and growth.

In particular, the agreement:

- 1) provides our exporters of goods and resources with the best access of any industrialized country to the largest, wealthiest market in the world;
- 2) constitutes a major step forward in managing the biggest trading relationship in the world and away from unilateral border measures; and
- 3) for the first time, provides a set of disciplines covering a large number of service sectors, as well as facilitates the flow of investment and temporary entry for business purposes.