

- a better opportunity to invest in Mexico's trucking industry and the phasing-out of barriers against moving cargo in and out of Mexico;
- a significant expansion of government procurement opportunities;
- easier temporary access to all three countries for business people; and
- greatly enhanced access to Mexico, one of the world's fastest growing markets.

There are other benefits, as well. The NAFTA strengthens our mechanisms for settling trade disputes, and the successful negotiation of the environment and labour side agreements is very welcome news for all three countries.

As a former Minister of Communications, I should also say a word about the cultural benefits of the NAFTA. I recently read an excellent article by Senator Bill Bradley, who made this observation:

Europeans increasingly equate nationality with ethnicity, with Bosnia only the most obvious example. But on this side of the Atlantic, none of the "New World" countries -- the United States, Mexico, Canada, Venezuela, Brazil -- use ethnicity to define what it means to be an American, a Mexican, a Canadian, a Venezuelan or a Brazilian. Enacting NAFTA will allow us to demonstrate once again that our societies are open enough and understanding enough to be able to grow culturally as well as economically and politically.

Every time governments show the courage to take a step toward freer trade, there are those who stand ready to cut down their efforts. Here in Canada, we can always count on a chorus of complaints from those who believe Canadian workers and Canadian management don't have what it takes to compete in the international marketplace.

You could say they belong to the Jurassic Park school of international trade and economics. Even now, as they cast their long shadows over the field of public debate, we hear the familiar grumbling about the dangers of free trade, the desire to return to another time, another age.

There is plenty of room for legitimate debate about the best way to achieve what we all want -- to find solutions to our economic problems, and to put every Canadian back to work. Canadians are anxious about their economic future.