

One thing we must do, since Canada's export performance depends so heavily on maintaining an orderly international trading system, is to give our active support to beginning another round of multilateral trade negotiations under the GATT. As we do so, we must also determine among ourselves what our objectives should be in a new GATT round, so that the agenda for negotiations will reflect our concerns.

At the same time, we have to consider our bilateral trade with the United States, where our access being seriously threatened. The paper sets out four possible courses.

We could try to go along under the status quo.

Or we could try to negotiate arrangements limited in scope to particular sectors, or to particular types of trade barriers (such as government procurement).

Or we could negotiate a framework agreement, which would commit the two governments politically to objectives and mechanisms for the removal of trade barriers and the settlement of bilateral disputes.

Or finally, we could try to negotiate a comprehensive trade agreement with the U.S.

In issuing the discussion paper, the government has made no prejudgment on which of the four strategies would be the wisest and most appropriate. There are advantages and pitfalls to each of them. None of them is free of risk, not even the status quo.

The question we are trying to answer in this consultation process is which course would be best for Canada.

This is the sixth stop in our consultation tour -- which will eventually take us to 15 Canadian cities from coast to coast. So far, we've been in Nova Scotia, P.E.I., B.C. and Alberta and I've learned a lot about the experiences, the problems and the hopes of business people on both sides of the country. Businesses in Quebec, from what I've heard so far, share many of the views of the Maritimes and the West, but there are other concerns here, as well.

The object of the exercise is to hear from everyone who wants to talk to us. When we have heard you -- and that should be along about the middle of May -- we will meet with the governments of Canada's provinces and territories to