

You know that there is much work still to be done. And when that work is completed, there will no doubt be more work to do as the world continues to change.

You know that the prime catalyst for change in this world is not the level of tariffs -- but technology: that no tariff on copper, for example, can limit the impact of fibre optics; nor can any tariff on vinyl records overcome the compact disc.

You know that in today's world, trade policy is less and less about exports, and more and more about investment location -- that the free trade agreement will lessen the need for Canadian firms to set up shop behind U.S. trade barriers, and help us attract offshore investment seeking to serve the entire North American market.

And you know that the only thing more difficult than living with free trade would be living without it.

So, since you know all these things, I am not going to mention them. Instead, I want to put the free trade agreement in its proper context, and describe our broader national trade strategy as we enter the 1990's.

We call it a Three Pillar Strategy, with the objective of helping Canadians go global.

That we will be pursuing a Three Pillar Strategy should not be surprising. It reflects the evolution of the global economy into what many have called the global triad -- the three pillars of:

- North America;
- the European Community; and
- a Japan-centred Asia Pacific.

Such a triad, of course, is not a new phenomena. Many of us will remember that the Tokyo Round of GATT negotiations were described as the Trilateral Trade Negotiations. And the agreements which underpinned such regional integration -- like the Canada-U.S. Auto-Pact and Europe's Treaty of Rome -- are decades old. That's why current developments, like the Canada-U.S. FTA and Europe's 1992 exercise, are not the cause of the triad, but their natural result.

In such a tripolar world, the GATT takes on critical importance for smaller trading nations like Canada. It is, in one sense, the bridge which links these 3 mega-economies. And in another sense, it is Canada's door into all 3 markets.