

-- and the anxieties of those concerned with Canadian identity in any proposal for a closer relationship with the United States.

These and other important issues would need to be examined closely before we went ahead. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you, as Canadians and members of this prestigious council, to spend some time thinking about the alternatives, and their implications, and let me know your thoughts.

I believe that Government must be more closely attuned than ever before to the business community. I intend to be. I will, further, give you a commitment that the government I represent intends to consult with all interested Canadians, and particularly the business community, on trade matters.

We are a trading nation. In a world in which protectionist pressures are mounting, we must act energetically and sensibly to maintain our export markets, and expand them.

It is my belief, and that of my government, that Canada's trade interests can be effectively identified and pursued only through the closest consultations and cooperation between governments, both federal and provincial, and the private sector.

The importance of trade to our economy cannot be overstated. On our ability to secure our markets, and to compete in them, will hang our standard of living, the number of jobs we can provide, and what kind of jobs they will be. We live in a rapidly changing world. Can we keep up with the changes? I am convinced that we can. But to keep up, we must work together. And together, we must decide how best to meet the challenges we face.

Thank you.