

Mr. Andrew, ladies and gentlemen.

It is a pleasure for me to be here with you this morning and to have this opportunity to discuss the Free Trade Agreement with fellow Westerners.

For generations we Westerners have fought hard against Ottawa's tendency to base national economic policies on the interests of people who live west of the Quebec-New Brunswick, and east of the Ontario-Manitoba border.

Since 1984, we have begun to redefine the balance sheet of this country. Westerners are finally getting national policies which take their interests and their priorities into account.

With the full support of the Prime Minister and my colleagues in the Cabinet, I negotiated the Western Accord with the energy-producing provinces, including Saskatchewan. The Accord eliminated those aspects of the National Energy Program which had been so harmful to Western interests and provided encouragement and incentives to the West's energy sector.

We eliminated the Foreign Investment Review Agency, which had driven investors away, and replaced it with Investment Canada, which has a mandate to promote investment by Canadians and non-Canadians

The result? In 1986 \$7.5 billion worth of foreign direct investment, an all-time record in this country.

A long-time objective of Westerners has been to diversify our industrial base so that we will be less dependent on resources and less vulnerable to boom-and-bust cycles. It is the key to a more prosperous and stable economy.

What have we done? Among other things we introduced the Western Diversification Fund. It not only provides much-needed funds for diversification purposes, it shifts decision-making power from the Ottawa Valley to the Western Provinces.

The fact is, ladies and gentlemen, that you now not only have Western voices influencing policy in Ottawa, you have Western brains and Western talent developing national economic policies.

In September 1984 Canadians gave us a strong and clear mandate to start building Canada again. That is exactly what we have done.

Since we came to power, well over 900,000 jobs have been created. Canada has had the best job-creation record among Western industrialized countries.