

Welcome to the Lester B. Pearson building on this Halloween evening. I am assured by Departmental officials that the security arrangements here are sufficient to deter even the most persistent goblins and ghosts that might seek to disturb us.

While I can offer you some protection from the spooks outside tonight, I think that Bill Deeks may have some designs on your wallets later on. This is called treat and trick. So beware!

I am very pleased to see such a good turnout of senior Canadian business leaders here. It reflects the strong commitment of the Canadian business community to renewing and revitalizing Canadian participation in the international Chamber of Commerce and the Business and Industry Advisory Council of the OECD.

In a few minutes we will be hearing from Dr. Peter Wallenberg, President of the International Chamber of Commerce, and the Honourable Hugh Faulkner, Secretary General of that organization. Gentlemen, let me express my appreciation for your being here with us this evening.

At the conclusion of our dinner, at around 9 o'clock, Bill Deeks will say a few words seeking your support, in a tangible way, for a more effective Canadian participation in the ICC and BIAC.

You are aware that the government is a full partner in the economic summits and the process of consultations on international trade and economic matters. Tomorrow I am departing for Canberra for a ministerial meeting on cooperation in the Asia Pacific region. Immediately following that I will be participating in the Quadrilateral Trade Ministers meeting in Tokyo, where Canada, along with the United States, Japan and the European Community will be grappling with the main issues of the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Before returning to Canada in late November I will meet with other members of the Cairns Group of agricultural exporters in Thailand.

This interlocking pattern of international consultations reflects the changing economic realities of our time: increased economic interdependence and the globalization of business.

We have to be fully engaged in the discussion of the international economic issues because, as you well know, Canada depends on a healthy international environment based on agreed and respected rules to ensure growing markets for our exports, to ensure fair treatment for our investors and ultimately to ensure our collective well being in an increasingly competitive world.

We are in business for the longer term. Historically Canada has relied on external markets for its products. Now it is even more important to be outward looking. I want to ensure that when trade rules are being written that will govern us into the next decade there is a Canadian at the negotiating table - and preferably holding the pen.