

MINISTERS FROM WESTERN CANADA, WHO KNOW HOW MUCH OF OUR FUTURE LIES TO OUR WEST. FOR A HUNDRED YEARS, CANADA HAS BEEN A PACIFIC NATION IN GEOGRAPHY, AND WE INTEND TO MAKE IT A PACIFIC NATION IN MENTALITY TOO.

CURIOSLY, THE TRADING INITIATIVE WHICH GENERATES THE GREATEST CONTROVERSY IS THE ONE WHICH CONCERNS OUR BEST FRIEND, AND BIGGEST PARTNER, THE UNITED STATES.

FOR MOST PEOPLE, CANADA/U.S. RELATIONS IS A MATTER OF EMOTIONS, NOT ECONOMICS. THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA MAKES SOME OF US NERVOUS, AND SOME OF US PROUD, AND PERHAPS NO ONE CAN LOOK AT THE RELATIONSHIP OBJECTIVELY. HOWEVER, I WOULD ASK YOU TO STEP BACK FROM EMOTION, AND LOOK AT THE PROSPECT OF A FANTASTICALLY RICH COUNTRY, OF 25 MILLION INHABITANTS, SHARING A CONTINENT WITH A COMPETITOR AND A MARKET OF 240 MILLION, AND SHARING A WORLD WITH NATIONS WHOSE LABOUR AND TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGE EVERYTHING WE KNOW.

ASK YOURSELF WHETHER A COUNTRY CAN COMPETE BY PRODUCING FOR 25 MILLION, WHEN ITS NEIGHBOUR HAS A HOME MARKET 10 TIMES THAT SIZE. ASK IF KEEPING WALLS -- EVEN LOW WALLS -- AROUND THAT COUNTRY WOULD LOCK WEALTH IN OR KEEP IT OUT. THEN ASK HOW THE SMALLER NATION SHOULD PLAY ITS HAND IN THE FACE OF A BIGGER NEIGHBOUR WHICH HAS THE SAME TASTES AND TALENTS AND TECHNOLOGY, MAGNIFIED TEN FOLD.