

ments that are sensitive to the needs of Canadian industry and Canadian workers. Third, it is clear that non-tariff barriers increasingly distort trade. Our negotiators have, therefore, been instructed to negotiate a broad and comprehensive agreement addressing these issues, including changes to government procurement practices. For example, if Canada were to capture 1 per cent of the government procurement market in North America it could result in the creation of 75,000 new jobs in this country.

If the United States wants to increase access to our market and truly wants Canada to sign precedent-setting agreements that could indeed serve as a great model for the world, then our desires must be respected and our wishes accommodated. Otherwise, there will be no deal.

However, we recognize that a good deal must be one that is fair to both sides. We make it very clear that we do not approach our commercial relationships with the United States as an enemy. The United States is a sovereign, hard-nosed nation with its own national interests to protect. It confronts Canada in the same situation, as a sovereign powerful nation with our own interests to protect, as we shall. We recognize that the deal cannot favour only one side. If such an agreement is to have any durability and value, or have any significance as a model in the world, it must be a fair deal. There must be growth and prosperity in the United States as well as in Canada so that both sides to this agreement shall prosper to the ultimate benefit of the entire world.

So, given these circumstances, if that is the objective, what was our approach, Mr. Speaker? I think the approach was coherent. First, clear declarations of intentions; second, an exhaustive preparation of the case; and third, a historic degree of consultations and co-operation with the provinces, the industry and, we tried, the labour movement.

My Government introduced this historic initiative to create jobs and ensure economic equality for all regions of Canada.

Over a period of decades, inadvertently, but because of our history and our trading patterns, we are in the process of building two Canadas, one which is rich and promising and one which is underdeveloped and underemployed. That is unacceptable because this Party and this Government stand for one Canada, fairness and equality of opportunity for all.

This is a vital part of that process which will ensure equality of opportunity to all Canadians whoever they are, wherever they live and whatever they do. We are delighted with the prosperity in Manitoba, in Ontario and in certain other regions of the country, but we cannot build prosperity and genuine growth in the country by diminishing anyone else's wealth. What we want is to ensure that Newfoundlanders, British Columbians, Albertans, and others, get their chance, too. They must be given the opportunity to trade their way to new prosperity.

There are legitimate concerns that have been raised at various times—entirely legitimate concerns. I tried as best I could to deal with some of them in the House when I indicated that the negotiations would not affect our political sovereignty, our system of social programs, our commitment to fight regional disparities, our commitment to defend our unique cultural identity, or our special linguistic character. These make up the essence of Canada. They are not at issue in these negotiations. They are legitimate concerns that we have tried as best we can to deal with in the type of atmosphere of fear and panic that some people try to promulgate. We will try to deal with them on a continuing basis.

As far as we are concerned, we know there is no magic formula. The process is always a painful one in a country like ours, especially in the case of such important and historical initiatives. Nevertheless, to me and my colleagues, international trade stands for jobs, prosperity, regional growth and a future for our children. Mr. Speaker, we must consider the impact that initiatives such as establishing new trade relations with the United States will have by strengthening the economy and the unity of this country in the next century.