

IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO BE ABLE TO JOIN YOU AT THIS, THE 55th ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CANADIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

UNFORTUNATELY, THE PRIME MINISTER IS UNABLE TO BE WITH YOU, AS HE IS IN WASHINGTON MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES. HOWEVER, HE HAS ASKED ME TO EXPRESS HIS REGRETS AND TO EXTEND HIS BEST WISHES TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE CHAMBER.

AS YOU KNOW, I AM ONE OF THE NEW FACES IN THE NEW PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT. IT IS THEREFORE NOT MY INTENTION TO BREAK NEW GROUND IN MY CAPACITY AS MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE. THESE ARE EARLY DAYS, AND I PLAN TO APPROACH THE MANY COMPLEX TRADE ISSUES FACING THE COUNTRY IN AN ORDERLY AND PRUDENT FASHION. WE WILL BE SEEKING YOUR IDEAS. WE WILL LISTEN. AND WE WILL ACT.