

## PREFACE

As of the release date of these Conference Proceedings, the Free Trade Agreement has been in effect for one full year.

Proponents of the Agreement point to various business success stories as proof of the faith placed in the Agreement before it was signed. Opponents, on the other hand, lay every real or imagined economic woe of the country at the FTA's doorstep.

One solid indication of the acceptability of the Agreement is the fact that we have seen both countries agree to an escalation in the rate of tariff reductions on some 400 plus commodities.

But the one thing that seems to stand out the most is that in spite of the high level of awareness in Canada of the presence of the FTA, the up-take of the opportunities it presents has really been quite slow.

It is therefore with a great deal of pleasure that we now release the Conference Proceedings as a timely reminder of the tremendous opportunity that has been presented to Canada to leverage our production to a larger and more value-added scale. We hope that reading the Proceedings will be much like attending the Conference all over again, but this time with the added perspective of a year's experience with the Free Trade Agreement.