

world was shrinking, that it was becoming a "global village." Let's start with that thought.

The global village is rapidly coming to pass. The world is becoming more interdependent by the day, its economies more intertwined. This is arguably to the benefit of all, and it has certainly been of value to Canada.

Trade is not a zero sum activity. Everybody gains by it. It produces wealth. It is the principal fuel of growth. In our case, exports have multiplied tenfold in the past four decades and imports have gone up almost as much. During the same four decades, our national wealth — the Gross National Product — more than tripled, and our productive labour force more than doubled.

We now export a third of what we produce and import three-tenths of what we consume. What we are doing, in other words, is trading on a grand scale. Auto parts from Ontario for oranges from Orlando. Coal from B.C. for cameras from Japan. Cod from the Grand Banks for Jamaican rum. Gas from the West for oil for the East. Plus lumber for coffee, airplanes for water skis, telecommunications equipment for VCRs, and so forth. Basically, the formula is simple: things we produce cheaply or well for things we don't. That's why trade works. And as it enriches our lives, it provides a great many jobs. Well over three million Canadians are in jobs that depend directly on trade.

But the question is how many jobs will there be in the year 2000 and beyond, the years you will be at your earnings peak? Will there be more jobs, and better jobs, in an economy strong and on the rise? Or will there be fewer jobs, more menial jobs, in an economy on the skids? To a great extent, the answer depends on decisions that Canada must make now.

The decisions are complicated to some extent by a perverse current in international trade — perverse in the quite literal sense that it runs counter to the Global Village stream. This is the current of protectionism, and it gains its strength from many sources — from the tide of hungry new competitors that have been popping up around the world, from the fact that the world's largest economy has a massive and chronic trade deficit, and from the fact (this being the real world) that everything keeps changing.

The changes are taking place in the marketplace, in what people want to buy. They are fundamental changes, indeed. The bottom has dropped out of commodity markets. Oil is on a roller-coaster, up and down, up and down. The international market for grain is not what it used to be. Resource-based economies are in trouble. High technology is sweeping the world.

In the U.S. alone, the information technology industry now brings in as much revenue as the auto industry. Worldwide, it will be the biggest manufacturing industry by the end of the decade. At least four countries are well on the way to producing a computer that will approximate the human brain.

Artificial intelligence is the sexiest thing going right now in the world of technology. And yet, it may come as some relief to know that the Future of "A.I." (as it's known in the trade) is still very far from clear. Some say computers will think like humans in five years, some say it will take 30 years, some say they never will. At the moment, A.I. is being developed to perform specific tasks on specific projects — an extension of automation — rather than as a great brain that can think like us.

They're hot on artificial intelligence in California, though. In the