

SUBJECT - Bill C-13, An Act to implement the Protocol on the Accession of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership

Introductory Speech— Martin Buckle, BCCTC - The British Canadian Chamber of Trade and Commerce – La Chambre de Commerce Canada-Grande Bretagne

I would like to thank the committee for the invitation to appear before you today.

The British Canadian Chamber of Trade and Commerce (BCCTC) was founded on June 1, 1951, under our original name, the British Canadian Trade Association (BCTA). This is, therefore, our 75th anniversary year.

The Chamber exists to promote the transatlantic business interests of our members and stakeholders, and our Mission includes four objectives:

- to promote the bilateral development of trade, commerce and investment between the UK and Canada;
- to help create better understanding between the Canadian and British business communities;
- to provide opportunities for members to meet for business and social networking; and
- to represent the opinion of the British business community in Canada on trade, commerce, finance and industry, and to represent the Canadian business community in the UK in these same respects.

It is this fourth pillar that brings me here today, to speak in favour of Bill C-13.

The total trade between our two countries varies from year to year, particularly as commodity prices change, but the UK remains Canada's third largest export market and the two-way balance of trade in goods and services exceeded \$50 Billion in the twelve months to the end of June 2025. The UK's financial trade with Canada exceeds that of Italy and Spain combined despite the proximity and size of those two countries.

Most of our trade is covered by the continuity agreement signed after Brexit – a new bilateral agreement is much needed but seemingly a long way off still. The CPTPP, however, is an opportunity for our two countries to affirm our mutual commitment to fair trade that does more than simply remove tariffs: it's a high-standard, forward-looking framework. It includes strong commitments in digital trade, data flows, intellectual property, labour and environmental protections; these are rules that Canada supports and helped design.

The UK's entry also strengthens the CPTPP itself. Britain brings economic weight, investment capacity, and strong alignment with Canada's approach to labour and environmental standards. The inclusion of the UK makes the CPTPP an even more attractive partner for future members, reinforcing a rules-based trading order that brings social, environmental and economic benefits.

COVID taught the world a lesson in supply chain resilience, the Russian invasion of Ukraine gave us another supply shock; extreme tariffs on trade with the USA added another. The CPTPP gives UK and Canadian companies more flexibility – more places to source, to process, and to export. It spreads risk and strengthens our combined economic security.

After Brexit, there was an uptick in UK companies reaching out to our Chamber to learn more about Canada and doing business here: after the introduction of tariffs on many goods heading from Canada into the USA, we started to see an uptick in Canadian companies looking to trade with the UK. Changes in the global structure of trade focus attention on the opportunities as well as the challenges these changes introduce. The spotlight illuminates everybody.

Last week we joined Canadian and Scottish companies online to prepare for Scotland–Canada Business Week at the end of April 2026. This initiative offers a unique opportunity to connect Scottish and Canadian businesses looking for new export or investment opportunities. Meanwhile the West Highland Chamber of Commerce will be making another Trade Mission to Nova Scotia this March.

Last year Virgin Atlantic opened a new route between Toronto and London Heathrow: in partnership with WestJet the carrier is now able to open up Canada to more travellers than ever before, whilst its onward connections from London to Europe, India, Africa, and the Middle East enable greater opportunities for Canadians looking to access global markets.

This year, starting in May, WestJet will connect four times weekly with Cardiff, the Capital of Wales and gateway to the western parts of the UK. I don't want to upset any of our Italian friends but if Wales make it to the World Cup this year, fans will have the easiest route ever to visit Toronto and support their team.

The social, economic and cultural ties between our two countries are flourishing and this Bill gives Parliament the opportunity to support our values, our businesses and our vision for a flourishing future.

Martin Buckle

Vice President & Treasurer.

British Canadian Chamber of Trade and Commerce