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#### **(d) Intermodal**

In the past, the majority of exporters relied on a single mode to move a shipment to Mexico. For the most part, this meant either rail or truck. More and more, however, carriers themselves are combining the strengths of competing modes to offer "intermodal services": motor carriers are shipping highway trailers by rail; railways are marketing container and trailer services to truckers and shippers, while ocean carriers are offering intermodal interface with rail and truck.

These initiatives cover both domestic and international traffic and are graphically illustrated in *CN North America's* decision to construct a new tunnel under the St. Clair River between Sarnia and Port Huron to handle double stack rail cars. Similarly, *CP Rail System* is enlarging the Detroit-Windsor tunnel in order to handle tri-level rail cars.

Both construction programs underscore the commitments that the Canadian railway industry has made to intermodalism, all of which is designed to provide shippers with a more efficient means of reaching markets in the United States and Mexico.

Quite apart from operating road and rail carriers, there are other companies which contract transport services and provide a through transport package for exporters. Appendix B lists some of these companies, frequently called intermodal operators (they are also called third party carriers or shippers agents). Certain of these companies have been in intermodal service for well over ten years.

For large cargo volumes, freight rates would be negotiated with the railways and truckers on behalf of the exporter. Trailers and containers would be loaded onto flat cars in either Canada or the U.S., depending which is the most effective and economic. Transit time from Montreal or Toronto to Laredo would take 4 or 5 days, with another 3 to 5 days for Mexican clearance.

As an illustration of their services, one major intermodal operator provides a door-to-door service between Canada and Mexico, providing TOFC (45' and 48' trailers) and COFC (40', 45' and 48' containers), a tracing service and insured carriers, and offers an "800" number for customers across Canada. Intermodal operators providing services between Canada and Mexico include *Freight Connection*, *Interamerican*, *Sunac* and *Wheels International* which may be contacted as shown in Appendix B.