

Canada, too, is a Pacific nation. During the election campaign which brought our government to power 14 months ago, Prime Minister Mulroney quite often pointed to the need for Canada to play a full role in commerce in the Pacific region. As the first Minister from the new Canadian Government to have the privilege of visiting Australia, I can tell you that we are pulling out the stops and getting more and more involved. The Pacific rim is certainly one of the most promising of areas for commercial activity in the world today.

Canada, like Australia, is a large land with a small population, and that is a combination that makes us both trading nations. Exports bring us 30 percent of our national income, and they bring you close to 20 percent of yours. They are very important to both countries.

The Government of Canada is committed to improving our trade performance. We are working very hard to do so. As Minister for International Trade, I consult frequently with my colleagues from the ten provincial governments in Canada. And together, we have developed a National Trade Strategy.

Perhaps the most significant item on which we reached rapid agreement was that there are two market regions that must get our priority attention -- the United States and the Pacific Rim. The importance we give to the United States is no surprise. It takes more than three-quarters of our exports. Indeed, the trade between Canada and the United States exceeds in volume and value the trade between any two other countries in the world.

As for the Pacific Rim, it is the fastest growing region in the world. Canada's trade across the Pacific exceeds our trade across the Atlantic, and it is growing more rapidly.

Again, no surprise. Our trade, like yours, was once directed heavily toward London and the Continent. But look what's happened since the war. In Europe, the Common Market has encouraged the Europeans to trade with each other first. And the Pacific Rim has come alive.

It would be something of an understatement to say that Japan has risen from the ashes. And what about Korea, where both Canadian and Australian fighting men were part of the United Nations forces only 30 years ago? It used to be that a "nic" was something you got shaving. Now it stands for "Newly Industrialized Countries", and most of them are in the Pacific. The new policies being pursued in China, with its potential market of a billion people, are enormously encouraging. And, of course, when we come here to trade, we feel like we're coming home.

Canada is not a late-comer to the Pacific. Our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, gave his support to what is now known as "the great Canadian dream" -- the building of a great railroad, the Canadian Pacific, that united our country from sea to sea. Vancouver has been a major Pacific port ever since.

Perhaps a bit of history is in order here. Canada's first Trade Minister was a gentleman named Mackenzie Bowell. Later in his life he served briefly as Prime Minister, but he was appointed Minister of Trade and Commerce in December of 1892. In September of 1893 he set forth on his first official trip outside Canada. Where did he go? With great foresight, he went to Australia. And two years later, he sent out Canada's first full-time trade commissioner -- also to Australia.

The gentleman in question was Mr. John Larke, a former newspaper owner and the President of the Oshawa Stove