

# Discussion at the National Conference

Mr. D.J. Wallace, Director of Transportation, Consolidated Bathurst Incorporated, chaired the national conference in Ottawa. He extended a particular welcome to overseas participants who were to address the gathering, and commented that the impressive turnout confirmed the views of the Exporters Coalition that trade with the developing world was a subject of major interest and concern to Canadian industry.

Outlining the agenda for the day's proceedings (Appendix D) Mr. Wallace highlighted the opportunity to learn the important conclusions of the five seminars held in major cities across Canada. He reiterated that the purpose of the seminar series had been to provide a forum for the many facets of Canada's trade community to get together to discuss and develop their own recommendations on new policy initiatives which were seen to be necessary to better respond to circumstances prevailing in certain trades. He expressed the hope that the positions adopted would be presented to the Minister for International Trade and the Minister of Transport for their consideration, and positive policy action.

Mr. Wallace characterized the challenge of the conference as being to construct a policy bridge which would allow the continued development of Canadian trade by guaranteeing access to competitive shipping, while acknowledging that many of our trading partners have adopted national priorities and policies in shipping which may run counter to Canada's dedication to competitive principles.

The need for Canadians to better understand the objectives and motivations of others was seen by Mr. Wallace as a necessary first step in seeking a mutually acceptable solution to current trade and shipping problems. This would allow the consequent expansion of commerce, which would be of benefit to all parties.

A primary objective of the June 4, 1987 Conference "Canada's Trade Community Speaks up — our solutions to transportation problems with the developing world" was to present the conclusions of the five regional seminars to a broad cross-section of senior Canadian officials representing trade, shipping and government interests. A spokesman had been nominated by

exporters and importers to represent the views expressed at the seminars in Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver, and to present the conclusions arrived at in the workshop discussions.

To facilitate the presentation, and to avoid duplication, the seminar summaries were structured to address five broad thematic questions of fundamental importance to the community of Canadian exporters and importers when faced with restrictive trade practices associated with shipping.

These questions were:

1. Have you (the exporter-importer) been affected by any shipping or cargo restrictions or have sales been lost or profits curtailed?
2. Is the present situation manageable or is it damaging Canadian trade and international relations? Should we be more active in protecting our trade?
3. In addressing these questions can we improve the interface between Canadian industry — and government and the present process of Canadian response?
4. To what degree should we emulate other countries in our response to this situation?
5. How far is industry prepared to go to ensure two-way trade is not impeded?