

PREFACE

Expanding Canada's status as a trading nation has been identified as one of the government's key objectives. As trade grows, so does the importance of transportation which, after the product itself, is probably the most important variable in ensuring a vibrant export sector.

Traditional markets like the United States, Western Europe and the Pacific Rim will undoubtedly continue to dominate Canada's exports into the foreseeable future, but other regions, namely the less-developed countries, (LDC's) will have to be energetically pursued as well if Canada is to maintain its status as a premier trading nation.

The survey which follows was conducted in 1985 in an effort to get from many of Canada's principal exporters to LDC's an assessment of the difficulties they faced in shipping to market.

The survey, although generally favourable, does contain some disturbing information. There appear to be few problems that the exporters see as universal, nevertheless, a full 42% of those surveyed identify obstacles of one kind or another in arranging marine shipments to LDC's. It is appreciated that these obstacles can cut very deeply into an exporter's profits.

A question generated by the survey is whether the general satisfaction expressed is in fact an indicator of exporters' resignation to absorbing such occasional losses. If so, can steps be taken to reduce the number of periodic problems that arise? Should regional measures be initiated to facilitate trade?

These are some of the questions that the Transportation Division in the Department of External Affairs will be considering in the months to come. The division's goal continues to be to improve the service rendered to Canada's exporters with a view to building Canada's trade around the world. To this end, any comments or questions on this study and its findings are welcome.