



Canadian Exporter Profile

Russel Marcoux, President • N. Yanke Transfer Ltd. • Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

"South of the Rio Grande, there's a big marketplace," said

Russel Marcoux, President of N. Yanke Transfer, shortly before his first business trip to Mexico. "It's virgin territory in a lot of ways, and I suspect there's going to be a lot of trade and commerce between us."

So, having built a small trucking operation into one of the largest transportation firms in Canada, and with a considerable business developed already in the United States, Marcoux began to cast his eye further afield. As a director of the Canadian Trucking Association (CTA), he was more than aware of the opening market in Mexico; he had attended Association meetings in San Diego and Mexico City in which this theme was explored. The CTA had also made representations at the NAFTA hearings, so Marcoux decided to investigate the potential for his company by undertaking a marketing trip to Monterrey.

N. Yanke is a family-owned company based in Saskatoon. Founded in 1968 by Norm Yanke, the firm was bought by Marcoux and his two brothers in 1980. The small, two-truck operation has since grown to a fleet of 240, and now has offices in Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver as well as its original headquarters.

The dramatic growth of the com-

pany is largely a result of switching the entire fleet to expedited, or express, service five years ago. Previously, Yanke Transfer had concentrated on dry bulk hauling of agricultural commodities across Western Canada. But when an opportunity arose to enter a long-term contract with Canada Post in 1987, the company decided to divest its dry bulk division, selling

"The Mexican people... are very open to us, to our ideas."

it to another western company. Thereafter, Yanke dedicated itself to developing its niche as a long-haul expedited carrier.

In a year, sales rose from \$8 million to \$12 million. The company has a state-of-the-art fleet, the will to take risks, a high-tech satellite tracking system, a commitment to staff training and a sense of teamwork. These attributes have led to incremental growth in sales every year, so that Yanke's sales projection for 1993 is about \$60 million.

This is a leading-edge company. Marcoux says: "We are talking and trying to stay in tune with the need to diversify, spread ourselves out a bit. That's part of our philosophy as a transportation company as opposed to being simply a trucking company."

So, he went off to Monterrey to spy out the prospects of getting Yanke a new market, and came back very optimistic after a week that included a visit to the border

town of Nuevo Laredo (end of the line, until 1997, for Canadian trucks).

"It really highlighted for me the potential, and the willingness of the Mexican people to do business with Canadians," he said after the trip. "They are very open to us, to our ideas."

Marcoux found the Canadian Trade Office in Monterrey willing to assist. "They served as guides to some extent, and provided an interpreter and were generally very helpful."

Was it a successful trip? "I accomplished everything I set out to do," Marcoux said. "I got the feel of the market, I established contact with carriers to partner with. The people I met with are, admittedly, the cream of the crop, very aggressive business people who have more glitz and glamour than we've seen, great computers, glass towers, excellent training facilities for staff. I'm very excited."

"They are sophisticated technologically; their operation is superior to any North American carrier I've ever witnessed," Marcoux added. This, from a CEO whose fleet, systems, administration and training programs are the envy of the industry, is high praise indeed.

Although transportation permits will be restricted until the end of 1995, Marcoux sees plenty of opportunity in a new market he will certainly enter.

"We're pretty excited about the potential of north-south trade," he concluded.