

Supply—Trade and Commerce

where trade fairs are concerned as they involve a sharing of costs between the government and private firms. Later in the spring we hope to stage a Canadian trade show and a Canada Week in Boston, Massachusetts. On present indications the West Indies effort and the Boston trade fair will have the keen support of the Canadian export community and we anticipate their success accordingly. In themselves they will provide an effective demonstration of the value that Canadian business places upon trade fairs.

During the balance of 1959 we propose to take part in a number of international trade fairs of both general and specialized nature in the commonwealth, Europe, the United States of America, the Far East and in Latin America. In fact we are being pressed by Canadian manufacturers to go into fairs new to our post-war experience, for example, Sweden, Iraq, Australia and Rhodesia, and have also been asked to participate in more of the specialized shows concerned with individual industries such as the food trade and the building trade in important markets like the United Kingdom, United States, Germany and The Netherlands. This program is being worked out in co-operation and partnership with interested industries and trade associations.

The department is convinced that participation in trade fairs becomes more and more effective as we gain experience. We are gratified at the evidence of increasing support that we get from Canadian firms. Based on past results and the expressed interest of businessmen, we are convinced that this activity is an extremely valuable one.

And now a word about export financing. Another effort which facilitates Canadian export trade is the operations of the Export Credits Insurance Corporation, which protects Canadian exporters on certain types of foreign sales against non-payment by foreign buyers and against certain other contingencies. Canadian exporters have represented to us that in some respects export financing facilities available in Canada are not sufficiently broad and flexible to permit them to compete against some other countries which offer more far-reaching and longer term credits. The point is being made that in some instances Canadian exporters have been competitive in respect of price, quality and delivery but have been unable to get the business because they were not competitive in respect of credit. The department has been looking into these reports and in co-operation with other governmental departments we are examining thoroughly all suggestions for additional export financing facilities.

[Mr. Churchill.]

A note with regard to trade missions, Mr. Chairman. We believe in the principle that if Canadians want to sell more abroad they have to go to foreign lands and negotiate and, where possible, do business there. Early last fall I accompanied representatives of the wheat board to western Europe on a get-acquainted visit with a number of important grain buyers in several countries. Then on October 7 and 8, I attended a meeting of the joint United States-Canadian committee on trade and economic affairs in Washington. We discussed a number of our common trade problems and we found the exchange of views useful. Later in the month, I attended meetings of the 12th session of GATT in Geneva. In November 1957, a group of 50 outstanding Canadian businessmen visited the United Kingdom on an extended trade mission under government auspices. More recently, I participated in the inaugural proceedings on the occasion of the founding of the Federation of the West Indies. This visit provided me with an opportunity to discuss a number of trade matters with the appropriate officials of the new federation.

Our trade visits abroad have been reciprocated in kind, and we have had an increasing number of visits of both officials and businessmen from other countries to explore ways and means of increasing trade. Foremost among them has been the British trade mission which came to Canada under the distinguished leadership of Sir William Rootes on April 24 spending a month touring our country from coast to coast. We are confident that these various trade missions—a Canadian mission going abroad and foreign visitors coming to Canada—cannot help but create a favourable climate conducive to the expansion of Canada's trade.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes a summary of the business of the Department of Trade and Commerce. I have endeavoured to outline the policy of the government, our trade relations with various countries and areas with some comments on particular matters and on trade promotion. Canada's export trade is of major importance to our entire economy and the Department of Trade and Commerce exists for the purpose of promoting that trade.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make my very first words on this occasion words of congratulation to the Minister of Trade and Commerce for having at long last given this house a comprehensive statement of the government's attitude and policy concerning trade. I am one of those who are very critical of the fact that in respect to this very important matter which the minister himself described as being vital to Canada the government has made no statement of