

Another trade initiative, and a major project for my department, was Marketplace 85. We brought back 150 trade commissioners from their posts around the world. They spent most of the month of March travelling through Canada. They met with more than 3,000 companies and conducted more than 9,000 interviews, one on one. I am particularly pleased with the results: more than 700 companies decided to go into the export business for the first time, and my trade officers are working with all of them to assist their international marketing activities.

I hope that we can be just as successful next March, in Marketplace 86. It is our intention to focus on the U.S. and Asia-Pacific markets in next year's program. Those are the areas in which we see the best prospects to increase our exports, and we are trying to zero in on both of them. I don't have to tell you about our bilateral trade initiative with the United States, but you may not have heard yet that we've started a major push in the Pacific Rim as well. Among other things, we're sending four additional Trade Commissioners to China, and opening consulates in Shanghai and Osaka. All told, we'll be spending \$6.5 million this fiscal year on our new Pacific Push.

We have many other projects also in the works.

To improve our competitiveness with other exporting nations, we're reviewing our present guidelines for concessional financing, particularly for CIDA projects, and for pre-investment financing. We're setting up special offices to seek out, and import, new technology that would make our industries more competitive.

We're beefing up our international marketing efforts in many areas. We are, for example, developing a computerized program to exchange information with the provinces on trade fairs, missions and trade visits abroad. This should be on-line on the first of the year. We're also introducing the computerized World-Wide Information Network to allow us to keep up to date on export opportunities abroad.

My officials are currently evaluating the results of various other trade initiatives, as well. Our basic concern is whether the initiatives result in additional export sales. I think that those in this room would agree with our criteria.

This has been a very active year for those of us involved with trade. But it may be nothing like the year to come. So fasten your seat belts and, Mr. Bergeron, let's get on with the Canada Export Awards.