

members of the mission with significant representatives of the public and private sectors.

Accompanying us on the mission was a broad cross section of Canada's business community representing, among others, the fields of consulting engineering, communications, oil and gas equipment and services, transportation, mining services and construction and contracting. I think it is fair to say that there was unanimous consent that a number of market opportunities exist in the Middle East and that missions like this one are important elements in enhancing the forging of business links in areas such as airport construction, technology transfer, joint venture projects, consumer durables to restock the empty shelves of Kuwaiti stores, transmission lines, trucks, aircraft, light rapid transit, port facilities, cable installations, drilling and well-capping, housing, power plants and refinery construction and re-fit -- these are only a few of the myriad requirements that were the subject of deliberations in all three countries.

Canadian technology is highly valued. It is recognized to be right up there with that of larger countries they know of: Bell Canada, Northern Telecom, Lavalin, Canadair; another example was Safety Boss of Calgary, one of four companies fighting the fires.

I was distressed to see the reprehensible destruction in Kuwait. At one point during a visit to the Burgan oil fields where we followed a team from the Canadian company Safety Boss at work, in one 90 degree quadrant alone we counted just under 40 major fires gushing from the black earth (which used to be white sand), against a black horizon under a black sky.

But a key element for success, in addition to technological transfer, and something which our business people, who had not travelled the region before, learned was that you have to keep coming back again and again. They also learned that exporting does not consist of products alone. Our hosts are, in many cases, wealthy in oil and other natural resources. But they are anxious to move beyond that to follow, in a way, Canada's example of development of a country that has moved from a resource-based economy into the modern age. Resources only form about 10 per cent of our trading equation at present and our maturity in dealing with these issues is something that we can share with our friends in countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE. Accordingly, joint venturing is an increasingly important activity that I believe must be pursued by many Canadians wishing to establish a longer-term relationship in the region. As the Saudi Minister of Commerce told us, of the 120 or so major projects currently underway in Kuwait, 90 involve Saudi partners.

As I said earlier, trade is the key to prosperity and as you all know, I have been mandated to lead on an important theme of the Speech from the Throne -- national prosperity. Canada must take