

Opening of Proceedings

At the national conference, as at each seminar, three speakers participated in the opening of the proceedings, the chairman of the particular regional or national meeting, and representatives of the sponsoring bodies. Mr. C.H.J. Hibbeln (Vice President, Noranda Sales Corporation) in his capacity as Chairman of the Exporter's Coalition on Canadian Maritime Policy, attended all meetings, welcomed participants, and outlined the *raison d'être* and history of the Coalition. This had been formed in 1984, and now comprised Canada's 17 major trading associations. The need for such an organisation had been identified when the then Minister of Transport announced the creation of a national task force to evaluate the case for a Canadian merchant marine. Mr. Hibbeln noted the need to ensure that the views of Canadian trading interests were understood on this important issue. While the Task force on Deep Sea Shipping had concluded that the establishment of a Canadian merchant marine was not in the immediate interests of Canadian trade, the Coalition had continued to monitor shipping related matters as they affected trade. Mr. Hibbeln outlined the concern of the Coalition at the increased incidence of restrictive trade and transport related practises in certain international trades with less developed countries (LDC's). He acknowledged that in these instances it was important to ensure an effective Canadian response. The Coalition had turned to the Minister of International Trade and the Department of External Affairs for assistance to organize the seminar series, and was confident that these meetings would assist in ensuring that the voice of Canadian exporters would be heard and better understood when work was undertaken by government to formulate trade and transportation policy appropriate to today's unusual operating conditions.

Mr. I.G. Lochhead (Director, Transportation Division, Department of External Affairs), representing the co-sponsor of the meeting series, summarized at each opening plenary the background events leading to the department's agreement to co-sponsor this cross-Canada discussion. Noting his department's concern for the competitiveness of Canadians in international trade, Mr. Lochhead outlined the dramatic changes which

have occurred in the structure and performance of international shipping, the role of UNCTAD in assisting the less developed countries in their quest to develop national fleets, the inception of cargo sharing policies, the circumstances now prevailing in a number of trades, and recent examples of discrimination against Canadian interests.

Mr. Lochhead concluded that as in the past, the Department of External Affairs in its advocate role would continue to work closely with Transport Canada to ensure that the views of Canada's trade community, as enunciated at this series of meetings, are reflected in future policy discussions relating to the delivery of Canadian goods and products to overseas markets.