

already quite familiar with the services available from External Affairs and International Trade Canada. At the Montreal International Trade Centre, our trade commissioners respond to more than 10,000 requests for information yearly.

Across Canada, these specialists dedicated to assisting exporters have directly assisted 30,000 exporting companies to garner orders totalling \$140 billion this year. These foreign service officers provide such assistance through a network of offices located across Canada and worldwide. Montreal is an important part of this network.

The best and most recent example of success in Quebec, and in particular Montreal, on the international exporting scene, is the Canada Export Awards. The awards were given out right here last week. Of the 14 winners, three were from Quebec, including one, Eicon technology, from Montreal.

Most of the exporting done by Eicon, which designs and produces hardware and software for business computer systems, is to Europe and the United States. Nearly 90 per cent of its \$50-million turnover comes from exporting.

We can also raise our glasses to Nora Beverages Inc., another award winner centred not far from here, in Mirabel. The company predicts that 84 per cent of its sales will be from exports this year. Nora is already the second-largest producer of imported bottled water in the United States. It also sells to Australia, Hong Kong, Japan, Africa and Mexico.

As you know, our exporting companies have not waited for the NAFTA, modelled after the FTA, to be signed before starting to sell in Mexico. However, this accord will make it easier for us to export to this rapidly changing country, which is opening up to foreign products and services.

To backtrack a little, Canada entered the NAFTA negotiations with the confidence inspired by the success of the FTA. This confidence is fully warranted.

When the NAFTA negotiations began, we consulted the business community at length, putting forth three objectives.

- * To begin with, we wished to obtain greater access to Mexico for Canadian products and services. This we obtained.
- * Second, our aim was to reinforce the FTA with the United States and to improve our access to the world's richest market. This we succeeded in.