

ERNMENT
CANADA
No.48/17

STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

CANADA'S TRADE POLICY

An address by Mr. George J. McIlraith, M.P.,
Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of
Trade & Commerce, to the Canadian Importers
& Traders Association, Toronto, April 9, 1948.

May I thank you for your kind invitation to me to take part in the Annual Meeting of your Association. I thank you for your kindness in inviting me and may I, in turn, express to you a word of appreciation for the good work you are doing in developing international trade. As an association of importers you are making a direct contribution to the Canadian Government's policy for stabilizing international trade and thus contributing significantly to the maintenance of high levels of employment and income in this country. If I can help you make that contribution by clearing away any confusion and uncertainty in your mind as to the Government's external trade policy at this time, I will be pleased.

On November 17th last, the disabilities under which you labour as importers were eased and increased at one and the same time. The Government was able to announce the concluding of agreements with 17 countries, the effect of which was to simplify the problems of carrying on international trade. At the same time, the Government announced that it was forced to restrict the import of a wide range of goods for the purpose of conserving foreign exchange. What I wish to do this afternoon is to highlight Canada's foreign trade prospects, and indicate the direction of Canadian Government policy for stabilizing and fostering trade abroad.

The Canadian Government recognizes that far-reaching changes have taken place in the international trading sphere as a result of the war. The broad detail of that change is fairly clear. As far as possible the Government is trying to anticipate the adjustments that will have to be made and to work them out in as favourable an atmosphere as possible.

Briefly, the situation is this: Whether we like it or not, we must have a high level of exports to maintain our prosperity, and if we export in large volume we must import in large volume, for in the long run, visible and invisible exports must be balanced by visible and invisible imports. This country is so dependent on external trade that we are now the third largest trader in the world. On a per capita basis, our trade is about three times that of the United States and twice that of Great Britain. In fact, our trade in 1947 was approximately equal to the pre-war trade of the United States.

Furthermore, whether we like it or not, the post-war pattern of trade which we have yet to work out for ourselves will have to be substantially different from that which prevailed before the war. Some countries will now assume a