

export sales to total sales.

Meeting these criteria means, by definition, besting the international competition. This year's nominees -- not just the winners, but all the companies that were considered -- have proved that Canadians can compete and win in world markets. They have done precisely what it is we must do as a nation to maintain our prosperity. They set themselves tough goals and achieved them.

In the process, they have set a standard of skill and excellence which Canada must aspire to.

Our exporters, of course, have always been internationally competitive. You couldn't stay in the business if you were not. And in my view the export community should have a stronger voice in shaping national economic policy - not only trade policy, but the full range of our domestic policies which affect our ability to compete.

As a step towards this goal, the Government is establishing a permanent International Trade Advisory Committee. The Committee's immediate assignment will be to provide counsel to the Canadian negotiating team as it proceeds through our bilateral trade talks with the United States.

But it is a permanent committee. It will provide the same counsel to our negotiators during the next round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations -- which now looks like it will get underway next year -- and it will be consulted on all important trade matters affecting the country.

Let me tell you a little bit about the committee. It will be drawn entirely from the private sector. Its first chairman will be Walter Light, the chairman of the Executive Committee of Northern Telecom, which as you know is one of Canada's more successful exporters. It will be known by a bureaucratic acronym, ITAC, and loosely attached to it will be 20 or so sectoral advisory groups. They'll be called SAGITs, and their membership will also be drawn from the private sector, both business and labour.

We in the Government expect a great deal from the men and women who agree to serve in this structure of international trade advisory committees. They are going to work hard, and we are going to lean on them, often and hard, for advice. It is my intention, therefore, that the new advisory committee system will assume the mandate of the Export Trade Development Board as part of its own broad mandate.