

Every time these or other sports stars offer technical assistance or coaching expertise to another country, Canada is sharing its finest resource: the best of its young people. Every time your organizations deal with like-minded groups from around the globe, you have an opportunity to help our country reach its foreign policy goals -- whether the result demonstrates the usefulness of mutual co-operation, or helps us expand trade or increase tourism.

Sport is a powerful magnet for getting people to want to come here and see us in our own country. That's why nine cities are competing vigorously for the 1994 Commonwealth Games and why Toronto is bidding hotly for the 1996 Olympic Summer Games. That's why we fought long and hard to bring the 1988 Olympic Winter Games to Calgary and that's why so much effort has gone into ensuring that they are the best Games ever held.

The Calgary Games will display the world's best winter sports facilities, Canadian-designed and Canadian-built. And I can assure you that we will be searching aggressively for export markets for that expertise and technology.

Canada's excellence in sports is linked to excellence in other fields and the confidence and assertiveness that go with competing successfully are evident across the board. Nineteen eighty-seven goes into the record books as the year Canada hosted two important international conferences, the Francophonie in September and the Commonwealth Conference earlier this month. Right now, we're looking forward to June, when the international economic summit meeting takes place in Toronto.

In the same way that your sports and their participants are a lesson to the rest of the world, you are an example to the people of this country. Champions tell Canadians something we need to know about ourselves -- especially at a time when the world looks like a decidedly dicey place in which to compete. We need to be reminded that Canadians seek excellence in themselves, and are unafraid of it in others. We can compete, in trade, as in skiing; in marketing, as in sprinting. Those who believe that we must cower behind trade walls don't understand this country.