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### ***(b) Trucking***

Trucking is the primary transport mode used to move goods between Canada and Mexico. Appendix A provides a series of statistics indicating that road has the largest, and growing, share of two-way trade (in value terms, approximately 45% of exports and 65% of imports in 1992). Within Mexico itself, nearly 90% of all freight is carried by truck.

A comprehensive range of goods are shipped by road, with only large quantities of bulk commodities being outside the domain of truck transport. Nearly all refrigerated cargo is carried on specially equipped trucks. Trucking is also the principal mode of transport for small, less-than-truck-load (LTL) shipments of general merchandise. Rail caters mainly to carload shipments and air targets high value goods.

In general, road transport from major Canadian cities to Laredo takes 3 to 7 days and once customs have been cleared, 1 to 2 days are needed to reach Mexico City. Laredo is the principal border crossing between Mexico and the United States, but trucks have a choice of several other points. The flurry of new trucking services and infrastructure developments (new bridges, expanded lanes, etc.) at numerous border crossings has vastly improved the flow of motor traffic and increased the prospects for faster interchanges at U.S.-Mexico crossings. For example, according to statistics collected by a U.S. trucker, loaded truck shipments through the Laredo gateway in both directions grew from about 400,000 trailers in 1989 to about 670,000 in 1992.

Numerous trucking companies transport goods to Laredo but not all of them have affiliations with Mexican carriers. Consequently, exporters must assure themselves that appropriate arrangements are made for a Mexican trucking company to take over the cargo at the border. This should be closely monitored as border crossings can involve lengthy time delays (from 2 to 6 days) as additional customs procedures and transshipment occur.

Some trucking companies make arrangements to simply transfer their trailer to a Mexican tractor which decreases the time spent at the border. Others lose time as their cargo is transferred from one trailer to another. Recently, Canadian trucking companies have concluded interchange or partnership agreements with Mexican trucking companies. Others are working to develop similar arrangements. Some American firms, including companies operating in Canada, also have established interchange agreements with Mexican firms or have established subsidiary companies in Mexico. In any case until NAFTA provisions come into effect, Mexican regulations state that a Mexican driver and tractor must transport all goods within that