

The North American Business Outlook Conference is a timely initiative.... This conference is timely, as I believe that the time is right for Canadian companies, particularly those SME's which have not already done so, to adopt an open and confident approach to exporting. Canada's economic fundamentals are sound. The recession is behind us.... Trade commissioners have provided a century of invaluable and unquantifiable service to Canadian industry. Today, more than ever, they stand ready to assist individual companies. I invite you, particularly the small- and medium-sized enterprises, to call on them, to use their services and to develop a solid and ongoing working relationship with them.... During the course of this conference, you [Canadian, American and Mexican invitees] will be able to assess the prospects for your businesses in the new North American marketplace. The opportunities are vast and the horizons are wide. Let us draw together our skills and advantages to create an economy of unsurpassed dynamism and let us build enterprises that are even more competitive in global markets.

Notes for an Address by the Honourable Roy MacLaren, Minister for International Trade, at the Inaugural Dinner of the North American Business Outlook Conference (Montreal, Quebec, May 3, 1994, 94/20).

The North has been overlooked somewhat in Canada's international activities in recent years. Part of the foreign policy plank of our electoral platform was our firm desire to assume a more active role in circumpolar affairs. Upon its election, the Liberal government made a commitment to enhance the northern focus of Canada's foreign affairs. The North must be part and parcel of Canada's foreign policy, because the stakes and interests that Canada has in the North are vital to its sovereignty and security. Canada's Arctic foreign policy must be premised not only on protecting the fragile environment, but also on preserving the traditional way of life of Aboriginal peoples. To do this, we must ensure that Aboriginal peoples have a direct role in decision making on the full range of Arctic issues.... Coherence and integration also require close attention to developing co-operative relations among all our circumpolar Arctic neighbours.... What is needed in Canada is a means by which we can pursue these initiatives in a co-ordinated fashion.... It is therefore with great pleasure that I am announcing today the Government's intention to create the position of Arctic Circumpolar Ambassador within my department. In making this announcement, we are joining our Nordic neighbours in creating a special ambassadorial position for circumpolar Arctic issues. The Arctic Ambassador will be responsible for co-ordinating Canada's contribution to circumpolar affairs.

Notes for an Address by the Honourable André Ouellet, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Northern Foreign Policy Conference (Ottawa, Ontario, April 30, 1994, 94/19).

CIDA :
Canada Provides Emergency Aid to Rwanda

May 2, 1994, 94-15

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is providing \$2 million in emergency food aid to victims of the conflict in Rwanda, Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet announced. "Canadians deplore the acts of barbarism in Rwanda", Mr. Ouellet said. "I would like to assure those who are working for the peaceful development in Rwanda that Canada will support them." The food package follows an earlier Canadian donation of \$1 million in emergency relief assistance. The food aid -- Canadian beans and flour-- will be channelled through the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to feed Rwandan refugees in Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda and Zaire, as well as those displaced in Rwanda. The conflict in Rwanda has claimed tens of thousands of lives and has resulted in an exodus of more than 250 000 refugees.

FINANCE:
Official International Reserves

May 4, 1994, No. 94-040

The Department of Finance announced that Canada's official international reserves decreased by an amount equivalent to US\$339 million during April to \$10 887 million; official government operations decreased reserves by \$758 million.

CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION CANADA

Funding for Counselling Victims of Torture

April 26, 1994 No. 94-27

Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Sergio Marchi announced that the federal government will provide support for the Canadian Centre for the Victims of Torture in Toronto. Mr. Marchi made the announcement on behalf of the Honourable Lloyd Axworthy, Minister of Human Resources Development (HRD). The funding is administered through HRD's Innovations Program. "Many refugees who are settling in Canada have been victims of torture or trauma in their countries of origin. The aftermath of torture can inhibit their ability to integrate into Canadian society and make the transition into the Canadian job market," said Marchi. "The Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture, through its many volunteers, helps these victims regain dignity and become working members of Canadian society." The Centre, which has assisted over 5 000 victims of torture from over 70 countries, will receive \$264 890 in funding.

Immigration Minister Removes Visitor Visa Requirement for the Republic of Korea

April 21, 1994, No. 94-25

Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Sergio Marchi, announced that citizens of the Republic of Korea will no longer be required to obtain visitor visas in order to visit Canada. This change is expected to come into effect by May 1, 1994. "The proposed amendment to the Immigration Regulations will encourage travel between South Korea and Canada," the Minister said. "Specifically, this change will enhance business and economic transactions as well as promoting cultural exchanges between the two countries.... Citizens of South Korea do not generally pose immigration control problems and have become frequent visitors to Canada for trade and tourism. Additionally, recent changes to South Korean passport issuance procedures ensure that the Korean passport cannot easily be used by citizens of other countries for illegal travel to Canada," Mr. Marchi noted.

STATISTICS CANADA:

At March 31, 1994, the net debt (excess of liabilities over financial assets) of the federal, provincial and territorial governments was estimated to be \$661.2 billion, or \$23 065 per person on a financial management system (FMS) basis. This estimate is based on actual provincial and territorial debt at March 31, 1992, and recently published estimates for revenue and expenditure for subsequent years. The total net debt of the federal, provincial and territorial governments has increased rapidly since March 31, 1982 (around the end of the 1981-82 recession). The total net debt of government increased from 30.6% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at March 31, 1982, to an estimated 93.0% of GDP at March 31, 1994. (*The Daily*, April 7, 1994)

UPCOMING EVENTS:

May 9-10, 1994: OECD: 74th Meeting of Executive Council (Paris, France)
June 5-11, 1994: OAS Annual Assembly (Belem, Brazil)
June 9-10, 1994: NATO, North Atlantic Council and North Atlantic Co-operation Council Meetings (Istanbul, Turkey)
July 8-10, 1994: G-7 Economic Summit (Naples, Italy)

