

December 1983 and January 1984). The conclusion of the commission, that the sinking was due to a combination of factors, was similar to the findings of separate American investigations. Cited as contributing factors were design defects, the storm's severity, poor training of the crew and inadequate provision of safety equipment. The rig's US owner, Ocean Drilling and Exploration Company was particularly criticized with regard to the latter two contributing factors. Without an adequate understanding of the rig's ballast control system, the crew were unable to rectify mistakes that compounded to the point of sinking. The report also admitted that the ballast system was "unnecessarily complicated." Thus, prime consideration for fault rested with the lack of "knowledgeable human intervention" (*Globe and Mail, The Citizen, August 14*).

The commission also considered the safety regulations for offshore drilling of the Canada Oil and Gas Lands Administration (COGLA) as "unclear," with guidelines remaining "too vague," and designation of chain of command "equivocal." Among its recommendations, the report called for the development of "enforceable regulations" to ensure that rigs "operating in Canadian waters are suited to sea and weather conditions." The commission's report suggested that rather than introduce interim measures, the federal government should legislate regulations that would enforce standards for offshore rigs in Canadian waters. Imposing "guidelines" which are "subject to interpretation," merely resulted in "inconsistent application." A commission spokesman was quoted as saying that "if the federal government does not toughen up and impose regulations, this entire report may be wasted" (*The Citizen, August 18*).

Representatives of families of *Ocean Ranger* victims expressed "anger and a sense of betrayal" with the release of the commission's findings. Said spokesperson Margaret Blackmore, earlier frustration had been replaced with anger when the report acknowledged that blame rested with both oil companies and governments for neglecting offshore safety. "The long litany of neglect spelled out in the report is unbelievable and disgusting," she stated (*The Citizen, August 17*). However, many lawyers representing families of victims have indicated an interest in using the commission's report as evidence in their presentations (*The Citizen, August 18*).

## **AUSTRALIA**

### **Defence Delegation**

A delegation of Australian officials, led by the Honourable Brian Howe, Minister for Defence Support of Australia, visited Canada August 7 to 10. The delegation first met in Ottawa with representatives from the Departments of External Affairs, National Defence and Regional and Industrial Expansion, and continued with a viewing of an Ottawa-based computer manufacturing firm. This was followed by a visit to Montreal for exposure to Canadian design and manufacturing capabilities in the aerospace, defence and advanced technology sectors, according to an External Affairs communiqué of August 8.

Then International Trade Minister Francis Fox indicated that the presence of the Australian delegation continued the growing interest on the part of both countries in increasing projects of industrial cooperation. Areas under consideration for such joint efforts included "defence-sharing, cross-licensing . . . joint marketing, joint venturing and the sharing of technology." Mr. Fox noted the possible benefits to be accrued to Canada by the Australian policy of developing and implementing industrial offsets with regard to government procurement. Anticipated cooperative efforts would, according to Mr. Fox, provide pricing benefits, offset provisions and deliveries, and provide mutual support in developing exports to third countries.

## **BELGIUM**

### **Joint Business Committee**

On August 30, then International Trade Minister Francis Fox announced the establishment of a Canada-Belgium Businessmen's Committee, designed primarily for the promotion of closer "economic and commercial relations" between the two countries. The Committee would be co-chaired by representatives of both nations, and members would be drawn from active trade-oriented firms in Canada and Belgium. Holding meetings twice yearly, the Committee would endeavor to "broaden and deepen" economic and commercial relations, forge links between business representatives of the two countries, "encourage investment," and seek "joint commercial ventures in third countries." At the time of the announcement, Mr. Fox expressed his satisfaction that the "dynamism" of the private sector had "demonstrated leadership in spurring economic growth" (External Affairs communiqué, August 30).

## **BULGARIA**

### **Agricultural Delegation**

A senior delegation from the People's Republic of Bulgaria met for discussions with then Agriculture Minister Ralph Ferguson and other Canadian agricultural representatives in late August. The Bulgarian delegation was headed by Vasil Tzanov, President of the State Union for Agriculture and Forests of the Council of Ministers, who was accompanied by Alexander Petkov, Minister of Agriculture. Major topics discussed in the Ottawa meeting with Mr. Ferguson were agricultural trade and bilateral cooperative agreements. Mr. Ferguson expressed his optimism for increased opportunities in the field of export sales and scientific cooperation between Canada and Bulgaria, particularly in purebred beef and dairy cattle. The Ottawa consultations were followed by tours of Ontario farms and food processing facilities and further meetings in Western Canada with government and industry leaders.