

It is a pleasure to be in Saskatoon to attend this trade seminar. It is an excellent example of how federal and provincial governments can work with industry to seek new markets and expand our exports.

This seminar is only one of over 250 events to be held during October as part of Canada Export Trade Month. Last week I attended a major international trade fair in Washington and opened a new trade information center in Ottawa. This centre, called Info Export, is a major initiative of Export Trade Month. It is located in the Department of External Affairs and has a toll free line enabling exporters to gain quick access to the trade professionals who can assist them with market information and intelligence.

Export Trade Month is a series of events like these designed to increase "export awareness". The objectives of Export Trade Month are twofold. The first is to increase public understanding of the central role played by export trade in our national economy. Second, to create among small- and medium-sized businesses an export "state-of-mind" to stimulate new export initiatives by Canadian business.

The message to business is simple - overseas markets offer both unparalleled opportunity and challenges. The opportunities are nearly unlimited, though they demand initiative, imagination and determination. The foremost challenge is to produce and supply quality goods at competitive prices. The pressing need to improve our international competitiveness is a major theme of Canada Export Trade Month.

Another and very important message is that a wide range of guidance and support mechanisms exist on a year-round basis to aid the entrepreneur who is prepared to expand existing lines of trade, or to open new ones.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a word about the support programs offered to exporters by the federal Government. One of the largest and most active, as measured by funding assistance, is the Program for Export Market Development, called PEMD for short.

Over the years, it has provided over one hundred dollars in assistance to fund more than 23,000 projects. To date these projects have resulted in almost \$4.5 billion in reported export sales. That's a good cost-benefit position. I'd like to improve it.