

An indication of the many-sidedness of the activities now being carried on, and one that is of interest to you and this City at this time, is the first Canadian International Trade Fair, being held from May 31st to June 12th. This is also the first fair of its kind ever held in North America. Many of your members are actively participating and will have a personal appreciation of the manner in which government and private business have usefully co-operated in this far-sighted national effort.

When authority was first granted for the organization of the Canadian International Trade Fair, in August 1946, plans and expectations were comparatively modest. The latest figures show that there will be products from more than 30 different countries displayed in more than 1,500 exhibits, and occupying in excess of 750,000 square feet of floor space. Buyers from 60 countries have already made arrangements to attend. This will be an unequalled opportunity for Canadian businessmen to cement trade and personal relationships with businessmen from other lands. The rest of Canada relies on Toronto to act as a gracious and accommodating host.

Approximately 40 per cent of the exhibits will be from countries other than Canada. They may well suggest new sources of supply for products required by Canadian importers and manufacturers who have been affected by import restrictions. The truly international nature of the exhibits is also expected to be a strong incentive for the attendance of United States buyers. Here is a great chance to show them at one time the whole range of Canadian products, and so stimulate increased exports south of the border for the U.S. dollars we need so badly.

I was particularly interested to learn of the plans prepared by the Canadian Importers and Traders Association, in co-operation with other organizations, for sponsoring World Trade Week in Canada during the first week of the Trade Fair. Dependent as we are on foreign trade, it is vitally important that every Canadian should be aware of what the Fair means to our economy. Although the Fair has been advertised thoroughly in 75 different countries, the fact that only buyers are invited to attend has kept it pretty well away from the attention of the Canadian public. This is one reason why your staging World Trade Week in conjunction with it is a particularly happy idea. I understand that the Trade Publicity Division of the Department of Trade and Commerce is co-operating with you in some of your publicity plans, and that the Department is planning to help your good work with an advertisement of its own.

I find that there is an increasing awareness on the part of businessmen of the difficult foreign exchange position in which Canada finds itself at this time. A re-orientation of trade calls for adjustments made by importers, the opening up of new channels, a great deal of imagination and a willingness to overcome difficulties. Repeated examples have come to my attention of a widespread willingness to co-operate. This co-operation is needed from all parts of the community. You as importers can make a particularly important contribution. You are in a position to explore the possibilities of importing from countries where our exports exceed our imports, such as the United Kingdom, British Dominions, and British possessions, Western Europe, and the Far East. I am confident that with the energetic co-operation of all Canadians working together our trade problems can be solved with consequent prosperity for our people.

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