

Statement

Minister for
International
Trade



Discours

Ministre du
Commerce
extérieur

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NOTES FOR A SPEECH

BY THE MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE,

JOHN C. CROSBIE,

TO A MEETING OF NATIONAL TRADE ASSOCIATIONS

OTTAWA

October 10, 1989.

Someone once said that a conference is a gathering of important people who singly can do nothing, but together can decide that nothing can be done.

Now, I'm sure that this does not apply to today's gathering.

Quite the opposite.

Meetings such as this give us the opportunity to reach out and exchange views, hammer out problems and, above all, reinforce the links between us.

Those links are vitally important because we share a vital mission--to compete successfully for Canada.

External Affairs and International Trade Canada is your department.

In our 127 trade offices around the world and our 11 International Trade Centres across Canada, we identify promising markets and sectors, prepare visits to potential markets, arrange participation by Canadians in foreign trade fairs, and involve Canadian exporters in visits to Canada by foreign buyers.

In 1988-89, our programs and services helped to generate over \$5 billion worth of business for Canadians.

That same year, we handled over 130,000 enquiries by Canadian exporters and almost 124,000 enquiries from foreign importers interested in Canadian products.

Our trade missions received about 36,000 Canadian business visitors and counselled over 49,000 foreign business persons about Canada's export capabilities.

That is a pretty good record of service to the Canadian exporting community. But, we realize that our job is far from done.

That is why we are consulting the private sector and provincial governments extensively on the implementation of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement.

That is why we are playing a leading role in the all-important multilateral trade negotiations under the GATT.

That is why we are strengthening our International Trade Centres across the country and opening new satellite trade offices in strategic locations around the world.

That is why we have programs such as Canada Export Trade Month and Marketplace 89.

We organize meetings such as this one and consult extensively through groups such as the International Trade Advisory Committee and the Sectoral Advisory Groups on International Trade to listen as much as to talk.

Effective communications are at the heart of productive working relations between the government and trade associations such as yours.

We have taken a number of practical steps to improve our capacity to communicate.

Firstly, we are improving our trade newsletter *CanadExport*, which now has more than 50,000 readers across the country. In a survey carried out a few months ago, over 50 per cent of respondents said that *CanadExport* and External Affairs and International Trade Canada were their main sources of export marketing information.

They also said that they wanted the newsletter to provide more specific sectoral information and to cover a wider scope of subjects.

We have listened.

In the advance copies you have been given today, I believe that you will find that the sixth anniversary edition of *CanadExport* not only has a new look, but a new focus.

You are also the first people to receive copies of our new annual trade report entitled *Meeting the Challenge of Global Competition*. We have published this report to inform Canadians about how Canada is faring in international trade and what the government is doing to support Canada's trade efforts.

We are trying to reach beyond the exporting and business communities to raise the awareness of Canadians about the importance of trade.

We have published over 40 U.S. export market studies, which we prepared in collaboration with Peat Marwick. The reports cover a wide range of industrial sectors--from fishing equipment to semiconductors. They provide information about the nature and size of U.S. import markets, as well as leads and marketing intelligence.

They are of particular interest to small- and medium-sized companies which are either not exporting or want to increase their exports to the United States.

I would now like to talk about another initiative we are taking, which provides further proof that the government is listening. It concerns the Program for Export Market Development.

Over the past two fiscal years, PEMD has helped to generate over \$2 billion in sales through support to industry-initiated activities. Government-initiated activities under the program have resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars worth of additional business according to industry participants.

Based on industry recommendations, here is how we intend to improve the program:

- up to now, only the fish, food and agriculture trade industry associations were eligible for non-repayable special activity PEMD funds. From now on, all industry associations will be eligible;
- thanks to input from industry spokespersons such as Roy Woodbridge, the United States will be added as an eligible location for PEMD support of the establishment of sales offices abroad;
- we have put in place a new discretionary fund to support projects which are feasible and promising, but which do not fall under one of the existing categories;
- from now on, Crown corporations and agencies, which can add to the impact of a government-planned trade fair or mission, can participate with industry partners in such events;
- we have also improved the reporting/repayment conditions for industry-initiated trade fairs and visits.

As this morning's session made clear, Canada faces a number of major trade challenges.

We have the challenge of implementing the Free Trade Agreement in a way that allows our exporters to draw maximum benefit from the opportunities created by the Agreement.

We face the integration of the European Community in 1992 and its implications for Canadians not only in Europe, but throughout the world and in our own market as well.

We face the challenge of the emerging and dynamic markets of the Asia-Pacific.

To an increasing degree, we must face the competitive challenge of the Newly Industrialized Countries with their growing economic and technological sophistication.

But, the greatest challenge we face is not south of the border or across the Atlantic or Pacific oceans.

No, it is right here at home.

It is challenge of culture.

We have always prided ourselves as being a great trading nation. Now we must ensure that there is a true trading culture in this country.

Do Canadians really understand how deeply we depend on foreign markets for our standard of living, our social welfare programs and the quality of life we have in this country and which is the envy of the world?

Do Canadians really understand how vitally important it is for us to be internationally competitive?

To foster such a trading culture in Canada will require sustained efforts by the public and private sectors.

A recent report by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology identified what they have called five "imperatives" for the United States to continue as a major economic power. They are:

- Focus on producing well-put production ahead of finance and monetary manipulation;
- Cultivate a new economic citizenship--an involved, educated, responsible and rewarded work force who will maximize productivity;
- Promote the most productive blend of individualism and cooperation in all aspects of trade;
- Learn to live in the world economy--understand other languages, cultures and technologies; and
- Provide for the future--invest in education and save for productive investment.

Canadians might keep those five points in mind as we prepare for the challenges of the next decade and the next century.

Canada's fate as a trading nation is as much in your hands as it is in ours. In fact, our fate as a trading nation depends on the partnership which exists between the public and private sectors.

The Government is committed to the Canadian exporting community because it is your spirit of enterprise, your capacity to innovate, your ability to market products and services which will determine whether or not Canada will continue to prosper in the international trading system.

Thank you.