



Minister for
International Trade

Ministre du
Commerce extérieur

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86/55

Notes for a statement by
the Honourable Pat Carney,
Minister for International Trade

CANADA EXPORT AWARDS CEREMONY

VANCOUVER

October 14, 1986.

Canada

It is a pleasure for me to be with you today. It is a particular pleasure to welcome to Vancouver all members of the Canadian Export Association as well as the other organizations represented here - the Canadian Manufacturers' Association, the Chamber of Commerce and the Provincial Government.

The presentation of the Canada Export Awards is one of more than 200 events taking place across Canada during Export Trade Month. All the events are important, but this one is special. Today we are giving national recognition to those companies that best embody one of Canada's national objectives - better export performance.

It is a pleasure as Minister for International Trade and as a Minister from B.C. that four former winners from this province are represented here today. I should also add that Reg Barclay's company, Seaboard Lumber and Mr. Gourdeau's SNC, as well as several other companies in the audience are recipients of the Canada Export Award. The level of export excellence represented here makes my job both easier and more rewarding.

Export Trade Month is a cooperative program. It involves business people, educators and trade officials in various departments and agencies of the federal and provincial governments. This cooperation reflects the growing consensus in Canada that our future prosperity is dependent upon improving our export performance.

Export Trade Month is the most extensive awareness program devoted to the promotion of export trade. It was started four years ago by Federal and Provincial Trade Ministers and is intended to create an understanding of the importance of exports to our economy - to focus on the benefits of exports and to encourage increased participation in export trade.

During Export Trade Month provincial committees from coast to coast stage events to assist exporters, from new exporters to the seasoned practitioner. Universities, schools and media carry the message to students and to the public.

We are attempting to raise public awareness across the country on the critical role played by export trade in our national economy. Something like three million Canadian jobs depend on export activity. Our message is that there is a direct economic relationship between export activity and economic health. We want that relationship to be understood by every Canadian.

We are also directing a message to the business community -- in particular, the small and medium sized enterprises which provide the majority of jobs in Canada -- to make them aware of the opportunities that exist in the international marketplace.

To help companies exploit these opportunities, the federal and provincial governments offer a broad range of practical trade support programs and mechanisms focused on the needs of our exporters. Many of you recall Export Marketplace. The stars of Marketplace were our Trade Commissioners, who came back from their posts abroad to meet business people one-on-one. Last March over 140 Trade Commissioners visited 35 cities across Canada and met with over 2,000 companies. Our posts abroad and the companies themselves are following up on the opportunities identified. Results after only six months show that over 25 percent of the companies have made export sales or expect to as a result of this trade initiative.

The global marketplace is large, diverse, and growing. The opportunities are there. But to exploit these opportunities, we need to be aggressive. We need to be alert and above all, we need to be competitive -- in price, in quality, and in the range of products and services we offer.

We must also develop an export state-of-mind. If we can condition ourselves always to think exports and become automatically attuned to export potential, in considering every business venture, we will improve our sales. That's the philosophy of our competition abroad, and it must be ours as well.

It is in this spirit that I'm approaching Export Trade Month. My federal and provincial colleagues as well as numerous businesspeople will be talking to business groups across the country. There will be seminars and workshops, trade shows, incoming and outgoing missions, service club luncheons with export themes and so on. All are intended to foster development of the export state-of-mind.

It would be stating the obvious to say that, to a business, exports mean profits. To the country as a whole, however, exports mean a great deal more. Exports means jobs.

Trade is a cooperative effort. In order to better assist you the businesspeople, governments are getting together and improving the service that we can offer. I am particularly pleased to announce a pilot project involving my Department and the provinces where provincial trade officials will be put in our embassies and consulates around the world. Indeed, British Columbia is the first province to participate in this program and over the next several months B.C. officers will be located in four of our posts. Recognizing the Pacific challenge, the first two officers will be going to Hong Kong and Seoul. This is the first of the federal-provincial cooperative ventures that I would like to see implemented to better assist the international marketing efforts of Canadian business.

I would like to turn for a moment to the Canadian Trade Strategy Canada's Trade Strategy has 3 main objectives:

- to improve Canada's trade competitiveness,
- to strengthen our access to foreign markets,
- to develop more effective international marketing skills

I'll be speaking later today on market access questions related to the launching of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations within the GATT and the Canada-U.S. trade initiative. These are critical issues and we count on your support in tackling them. Indeed I understand that a survey of the CEA membership indicated a 92 percent favourable response to a free trade agreement with the U.S.

As a government we can and must work to ensure market access. As a government we are and will continue to work with you to take advantage of the market opportunities.

We are here today to honour companies that have taken advantage of the opportunities and made a major contribution to Canada's export performance. That is why I'm so pleased to be here.

I'm happy to be able to report that the Export Awards Selection Committee composed of representatives from the private and public sectors as well as the media found its task extremely difficult. The calibre of the nominees was higher than ever before.

Indeed, the chairman of this year's Selection Committee - Frank Petrie - has recommended the establishment of a new award. For the first time and to reflect the high caliber of the more than 200 applications, a limited number of Honourable Mentions will be awarded. On your tables you have a list of the 25 companies that deserve your recognition. I congratulate each and every one of them.

I'm also pleased to note that the winners represent many industrial sectors, small and large enterprises, from across Canada. That speaks well for Canadian business.

The criteria for the Awards are demanding. A firm must demonstrate significant achievement in exporting, in terms of sales, financing, or promotion of export trade. These achievements are measured by increases in sales over the three most recent fiscal years, by success in penetrating new markets, and by success in introducing new products into the world market. Additional factors assessed include the level of Canadian content, the range of markets where sales are made, the retention of market share in the face of strong competition and the ratio of a firm's export sales to total sales.

Meeting these criteria mean, by definition, besting the international competition. This year's nominees -- not just the winners, but all the companies that were considered -- have proved that Canadians can compete and win in world markets. They have done precisely what it is we must do as a nation to maintain our prosperity. They set themselves tough goals and achieved them.

In the process, they have set a standard of skill and excellence which Canada must aspire to. The companies that receive the Canada Export Award are world class competitors. They are tough, aggressive and determined. They show that the excellence of Canadian goods and services ranks them among the best in the world.

Our exporters, of course, have always been internationally competitive. You couldn't stay in the business if you were not. And in my view the export community should have a stronger voice in shaping national economic policy - not only trade policy, but the full range of our domestic policies which affect our ability to compete.

My introduction to the International Trade portfolio has been a busy one. The next several months promise to be just as active. I can promise you during that period and beyond, that together, we will open the doors to new markets and develop those markets to sell more goods and services.

Mr. Bergeron, let's get on with the Canada Export Awards.