

Alberta Private Sector Roundtable - October 2000, Calgary

The *Agreement on Internal Trade* (AIT) was signed by First Ministers in July 1994 and came into effect in July 1995. Since that time, Parties to the Agreement (all provinces, two territories and the federal government) have been engaged both in negotiating the terms established in the work plans in the Agreement, and in implementing those portions of the Agreement that are in effect. Over the past year there has been a growing recognition of the need to increase awareness of the Agreement.

On Friday, October 27, 2000, International and Intergovernmental Relations hosted a meeting between the Honourable Shirley McClellan, former Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations, and approximately 25 of Alberta's stakeholders in the Agreement from various sectors of the economy. Representatives included members of organizations concerned with government procurement, investment, labour, agricultural and food goods, transportation, natural resources processing, energy and environment. This half-day session was held at the McDougall Centre in Calgary.

The purpose of the meeting was to provide Albertans with an opportunity to make their views and concerns known and to inform the minister of the issues that they face in doing business across Canada. This knowledge will better equip the current Minister for International and Intergovernmental Relations, the Honourable Halvar Jonson, to represent Albertans at the next Committee on Internal Trade (CIT) meeting, which he will Co-Chair in 2001.

Overview

Representatives from Alberta Community Development, Volunteer Services, facilitated the meeting. The Public Affairs Bureau, Communications Technologies, took care of sound and recording requirements. Two sectoral representatives from the Government of Alberta attended as observers.

Participants were provided with a workbook and briefing material on the Agreement prior to the meeting in order to facilitate preparation for discussion at the roundtables. At the onset of the meeting, Rudy Palovcik, then Director of Internal Trade, and Minister McClellan provided opening remarks regarding the AIT. Following this, the attendees entered into discussion at their respective round tables. The participants were grouped by sector at four round tables in the following combinations: procurement and investment; labour mobility and consumer-related measures and standards; agricultural and food goods and transportation; natural resources processing, energy and environment.

The discussion was guided by questions posed to the participants. The participants were first asked to identify the issues that they faced with internal trade in Canada, particularly concerning the AIT. Next, they were asked to describe how these issues developed. Finally, drawing from the discussion of the previous two questions, participants were asked to report on the key issues the Minister should be aware of for the upcoming CIT meeting. During this time, the Minister briefly joined the various tables for discussion. Upon the conclusion of discussions, a representative from each roundtable then reported on a summary of the identified issues to the Minister.

The summary of discussions, conclusions and recommendations can be found in the "Report on Stakeholders' Meeting - October 27, 2000". The website link to this report is: http://www.iir.gov.ab.ca/trade_policy/pdfs/Report_on_Stakeholders_Mtg_27Oct2000.pdf

The meeting in Calgary reinforced the commitment made to Alberta's stakeholders by the Honourable Dave Hancock, former Minister of Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Affairs, to consult and maintain open communication with them on issues concerning the AIT. As Alberta became Co-Chair of the CIT in April 2000, we are in a strong position to advocate Alberta's views. Therefore, it is important for the Government of Alberta to become aware of the position of Alberta stakeholders in the Agreement.

For additional information about the *Agreement on Internal Trade*, please visit the Domestic Trade section of our website at the following website link: http://www.iir.gov.ab.ca/trade_policy/interprovincial.asp.