

Remarks for Plenary session

Beyond Borders: Succeeding in the Global Landscape

Minister of International Trade Diversification

The Honourable Jim Carr

9:00 a.m. Thursday, Aug 16 2018

9 minutes (988 words) - Podium

I am incredibly proud to be leading the first-ever, Canadian government-led LGBTQ2 trade mission.

And I am inspired to be doing so right here in Philadelphia, a city that has so often been the first in the nation to set a new bar and challenge the status quo.

Anyone who knows even a little bit of their U.S. history, has probably heard of the Liberty Bell, its famous resident inventor, diplomat and founding father, Benjamin Franklin, or how Philadelphia was home to the Continental Congress.

But it is the details captured within these famous objects, the stories that surrounded famous men and the early deeds long forgotten that captures my imagination.

The Liberty Bell is famous for its story and of course, its infamous crack but it is the inscription that gives me the most inspiration.

It reads, “*Proclaim LIBERTY Throughout All the Land Unto All the Inhabitants thereof*”.

Liberty to all the inhabitants...time we redouble our efforts to crack that particular sentiment and make it so.

Mr. Franklin’s writings and oratory are legendary but it was one of his contemporaries, John Dunlap, who was responsible for ultimately making sure those of us here today can read what we wrote and said at the time.

It was John Dunlap who kept the printing press alive and well during the darkest moments of the war.

It was John Dunlap's presses that printed the first – actually first two hundred – copies of what ultimately became the Declaration of Independence.

And it was those very same presses that ushered in the first successful daily newspaper.

His presses machined the very declaration of independence that would ultimately enshrine the freedom of the press his country's first paper enjoyed.

And finally, in 1780, An Act for the Gradual Abolition of Slavery, was passed by the Pennsylvania legislature.

It was deeply imperfect and ultimately failed but it was the first act abolishing slavery in the course of human history to be adopted by a democracy.

Taken together, these details say a great deal about this place and the work we still have ahead of us, including the recognition that human rights are universal and that each person is entitled to nothing less than dignity and agency.

And I am here to say that as the journey towards these goals continues, you will not be alone.

Our government is committed to tackling the unique barriers you have faced in achieving equality and the full recognition of who you are and what you have built.

We are working hard to right the discrimination that for too long underpinned and fostered those barriers.

I am proud that our government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, has made advancing the dignity and inherent human rights of every single individual a national and international imperative.

And we are backing that up with action.

We enshrined in our legislation protections for Transgender and non-binary Canadians in the Criminal Code of Canada and the Canadian Human Rights Act.

We updated guidelines to ensure that the Immigration and Refugee boards show greater respect and understanding for LGBTQ2 refugee claimants.

We introduced gender neutral passports ensuring that trans and non-binary Canadians do not face discrimination when they travel.

And we have publicly apologized for the past, a history rife with examples of discrimination and the criminalization of love.

To that end, we have also announced that those individuals who were charged criminally for same-sex intimacy will have their criminal records expunged.

Our Prime Minister has proudly marched in Pride parades across our country and raised the rainbow flag on Parliament Hill.

Of course, our government knows there is still work to be done and we are working hard to ensure that this work gets done.

When it comes to your day jobs, quite literally the businesses you have built, I know that you faced discrimination and circumstances few other business-owners and entrepreneurs can appreciate.

I know it takes remarkable courage to hold steady and stay determined in the face of those challenges, especially in a world that seems to offer more barriers than support.

And yet you stayed true to who you are and committed to what you wanted to achieve.

These are just some of the reasons why, together with Canada's first-ever Special Adviser to the Prime Minister on LGBTQ2 Issues, Randy Boissonnault, we are here to visibly and clearly offer that hand and support.

We are in Philadelphia to bring Canadian LGBTQ2-owned businesses together with potential partners who are looking for the high-quality products and services you have to offer.

Judging by the number of representatives from major corporations here, they also see the value you bring as potential business partners.

We are also here to promote Brand Canada, a brand that stands for unparalleled quality, innovation and value but one that also stands FOR the values we all share.

For those of you that do not know, just last week in Vancouver, Canada hosted the Equal Rights Coalition Global Conference on LGBTI Human Rights and Inclusive Development, titled “Leaving No One Behind.”

We will be relentless in that mission.

When we go about that important work in trade, we will do so with an eye not just to the dynamics we see today but to where things will be in twenty and fifty years from now.

As we all know, trade is over decades.

That is why we are working hard to secure deals that work for more Canadians.

Our agenda is relatively simple. It is about ensuring that the jobs, growth and prosperity generated by the global trading system are more accessible for more Canadians.

Levelling the playing field in trade means everyone gets a fair chance to compete and win; it means encouraging more people, particularly those unaccustomed to it, to get into the export game.

Our agenda means giving more underrepresented groups, like the LGBTQ2 community, the tools, connections and access necessary to secure their first global sale or partnership.

We will make sure every single business-owner or aspiring entrepreneur can tap new markets with the confidence that comes from knowing their government has their back.

We know that is not only the right thing to do, it just makes good economic sense too.

In today's rapidly shifting, sometimes bewildering global marketplace, success will only come if we shake up the status quo and shake every tree in order to gain market access.

This is true in established and important markets like here in the United States and for up and coming markets around the world.

For a small business, many of whom are born global, those twin dynamics are critical to success.

Because small businesses that export are more competitive and can absorb and adapt to changes in the economy.

It is my job to tap every market, established and new, and to do so on terms that work for more of you.

It is my job to make Canada the most connected country through trade in the world.

I want every company and country out there to know that when you partner with a Canadian company, you not only gain their remarkable quality, innovation and diverse talent but access through them to the global markets we are securing right now.

And we are making real progress.

Canada has championed real and meaningful reforms in trade while simultaneously opening up new markets, just this year adding 1 billion consumers to the list of countries where Canadians now have preferential access.

Those new deals include provisions for small business, provisions on gender, the environment and labour.

We are building, or perhaps rebuilding, a world where the rules bend to the will of every single entrepreneur and business owner rather than to the will of the few.

Of course, we know there is more work to do but together we can shape a world where everyone gets a fair chance to compete and win, to secure their first global deal and openly celebrate and realize their ambitions.

Thank you. Merci.