

## Data bank provides information to potential exporters

Both Canadian and foreign firms can take advantage of trade information provided by the Department of External Affairs in preparing their export strategies.

For companies to be able to compete effectively in world markets, they need all the information they can get to assess the export potential of their products.

The International Trade Data Bank (ITDB) maintained by the Department of External Affairs is one tool available to potential exporters. The information in the bank is based on data received on computer tapes from the Statistical Office of the United Nations. It includes export and import flow data for 66 trading nations as well as for groupings such as the European Economic Community or the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. The reporting countries provide the destinations of their exports and the origins of their imports. At present, the ITDB has information for some 2 600 individual commodities in files running from 1962 to 1981 (the current year) for which statistics are available.

The statistics of exports and imports broken down by type of commodity and country of origin or destination are natural starting points for research into foreign markets. The bank can be a valuable tool to help identify product and market areas for Canadian exports, as well as imports. A manufacturer can assess the relative attractiveness of trade

in particular markets with reference to past performances measured by trade statistics.

### Statistics on competitors

The individual marketing executive requires statistics on the performance of foreign competitors in the same product line as well as statistics on whether the market as a whole is expanding or contracting.

The data bank is most useful to smaller businesses lacking the means of obtaining their own export data. People who do not know the export business but who are curious about the possibility of getting into foreign markets can be supplied with some good basic data on what the import situation is in the reporting countries and who the present suppliers are in terms of other countries.

Trade statistics by no means pre-empt other sources of export intelligence. However, they do provide a firm basis for any detailed study of export conditions and prospects.

### Market trends

The information in the data bank is meant to indicate market trends and trade performance comparisons rather than provide hard figures on sales opportunities. The UN statistics cannot be taken as absolute since discrepancies occur among the different countries' trade data for various reasons. Also, in

some cases, the method of classification used is too broad to be useful in certain product areas.

However, the use of the International Trade Data Bank can provide the first step in making export plans. It then can be followed by the detailed research demanded by the major step of entering world markets successfully.

Until recently, the data bank has been used mainly by government agencies and departments and academic organizations for a variety of purposes. Now it is available to anyone wishing to make use of it, at minimal cost, on request.

For further information on the ITDB contact: Richard Brown, International Economic Policy Secretariat, Department of External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson Bldg., Ottawa, Ontario Canada K1A 0G2.

## Energy act proclaimed

The new Energy Monitoring Act, which is intended to obtain information on the operations of large petroleum corporations in Canada, was proclaimed on February 24.

The new act and its related regulations require large petroleum corporations to file information on their activities and financial performance, and increases the minimum assets threshold (established in earlier legislation) for companies reporting from \$5 million to \$10 million.

The new act also provides for the continuation of the Petroleum Monitoring Agency (PMA), which was established in August 1980. All data collected by the agency will continue to be treated in strictest confidence.

"Only larger companies are required to report under this new legislation," Energy Minister Jean Chrétien said. "It will also reduce the administrative burden on reporting companies, since much of the data required will be obtained from Statistics Canada."

The statistics collected under the Energy Monitoring Act will continue to be published in semi-annual PMA reports. These reports provide governments, industry, taxpayers and consumers with comprehensive and timely information on the activities and financial performance of the petroleum industry in Canada. The Energy Monitoring Act replaces the Petroleum Corporations Monitoring Act, the previous legislative authority under which corporations were required to report on their activities.

## Ministers meet with World Bank president

*Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau (right) speaks with A.W. Clausen, president of the World Bank at a luncheon held during the latter's visit to Ottawa on March 21. Mr. Clausen met with the Prime Minister, Minister of Finance Marc Lalonde and Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan MacEachen for talks on the economic problems facing the world and how institutions could be more responsive to them.*



Richard Vroom