

S I G N P O S T S

TORONTO — In a rare venture for a foreign diplomat, the Netherlands' Ambassador to Canada, Jan Breman, has offered a cautious view of the constitutional crisis over the Meech Lake Accord. "A small flag of warning" is how he characterized his comment during a speech to the Canada Netherlands Chamber of Commerce. "As someone who has lived more than 4 1/2 years in this beautiful country ... I want to underline and stress the concept of Canada," he said. "Whether we — Europeans — invest in Ontario, in British Columbia or in Quebec, we are investing in Canada ... because we believe that the economic strength of Canada is based on the cohesion of its provinces. The vital need for cohesion, visible and in practice, is manifest in Europe. Europeans would, in consequence, not comprehend any movement to the contrary in Canada."

OTTAWA — A proposed "revitalization" of Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. is central to a renewed federal commitment to sustaining the nuclear energy option. There is a new federal-provincial partnership to ensure adequate funding and direction for continued research and development over the next seven years. "This will confirm ... significant economic, energy and environmental benefits through the 1990s and into the next century", Energy Minister Jake Epp says. "Facing real concerns about global climate change, this government believes that it is essential to keep the nuclear option open." Ontario Hydro, which has one of the largest nuclear generating bases in North America, is increasing its contribution to AECL R&D by approximately \$30 million a year. Quebec and New Brunswick, the only other provinces with power reactors, will provide an additional \$3 million and \$1 million, respectively, in each year. Ottawa's commitment is \$31.5 million a year. AECL will continue to explore export potential, but Mr. Epp says "the priority ... will be to serve domestic needs", including the feasibility of other provinces using a smaller reactor AECL is developing to compete with coal-fired generation stations in the 450-megawatt range.

WARSAW — A new short-term export credit insurance facility for Poland affords

Canadian suppliers of goods and services up to 90% protection against loss. The \$20 million package is a revolving credit facility and since sales in any one year could exceed that amount, additional export credits will be extended as earlier sales are paid for. The facility provides support for transactions involving payment within 180 days or less and the protection is limited to transactions in which payment is made by irrevocable documentary credits issued by Polish banks acceptable to the Export Development Corp.

OTTAWA — The federal government has just concluded InvestTech '90, a 12-city series of meetings at which officials from Canadian missions abroad outlined for the private sector "the benefits of attracting technology and investment from other countries." International Trade Minister John Crosbie says increasing global competition is forcing business everywhere to look beyond traditional national boundaries.

HAVANA — Louise Frechette, Assistant Deputy Minister of External Affairs (Latin American and Caribbean), said during an official visit that Canada is seeking dialogue with Cuba on bilateral and multilateral issues as part of an effort to broaden links with the region as a whole. "We've always had good relations with Cuba and we propose to improve them even more", she said before returning to Ottawa April 29.

OTTAWA — A mid-air collision over West Germany between two Canadian CF-18 fighters last month and the crash of another off British Columbia brought to five the number lost this year. They were the 10th, 11th and 12th destroyed since Canada began taking delivery of the McDonnell Douglas fighters in 1982. Of the losses in which cause has been identified so far, all but one have been attributed to pilot error; the exception was a crash resulting from an engine fire. The Department of National Defence imposed a brief moratorium on CF-18 flights before permitting them again with greater minimum airspeeds and higher minimum altitudes.

WASHINGTON — Environment Minister Lucien Bouchard, here for a

17-nation conference on global warming, wasted no time in reacting to a suggestion by President George Bush that more research is needed. "The price of inaction is too high to wait upon further research", Mr. Bouchard complained only a few hours after Mr. Bush said a better understanding of the basic processes at work "was crucial." The President was trying to explain why he wants a 60% cut in the budget for research on global climatic change. Mr. Bouchard agreed more research is warranted, but insisted also on remedial action. "We can, and we must, do both."

OTTAWA — The Canadian Exporters' Association says "the over-valued Canadian dollar is proving disastrous for Canadian exports." A recent membership survey indicated that 75% are experiencing difficulty because of the appreciation of the currency against most others. The result has been that 68% of the companies who responded to the survey have had to reduce prices, 29% have foregone export opportunities and 29% have sourced exports from affiliates elsewhere. "Particularly disturbing is the fact that 23.2% ... reported that the high Canadian dollar has materially affected their strategy to take advantage of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement." CEA President James Taylor says exporters are confused: "For three years, the government and the Bank of Canada has said high interest rates are needed to combat inflation. Now exporters are told high interest rates are needed to support the dollar. Exporters want and need a lower dollar that reflects more closely its 'real' value, not the value set by international speculators attracted by excessively high interest rates."

TORONTO — Federal grants totalling \$1.6 million, the first under the government's "Going Global" trade promotion effort, are central to the creation of a programme for the study of Asian languages and business practices. The funds are being divided between the Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies and the Ontario Centre for International Business. The former brings together researchers from the University of Toronto and York University while the latter is a partnership of the business and law faculties of the two aforementioned insti-