

help bring Canadian exporters into contact with foreign buyers. They also act as consultants in all phases of international marketing. A useful complement to the trade commissioner service, particularly for exporters who are just starting up or who do not feel that they are strong enough financially to have a full-fledged export division, are trading houses. They conduct a wide range of activities and they all possess a specialized practical knowledge of foreign markets. Their areas of market research expertise have been included in a Directory of Canadian Trading Houses to assist you.

In another vein, it is clear that the future of Canadian trade is largely dependent on the general economic climate and on the orderly operation of the international trading system. The recession has created heavy protectionist pressures, both in Canada and among our main trading partners. The crisis of indebtedness in many developing countries has resulted in the discontinuation of markets that until very recently were among the most dynamic. A revival of trade and the strengthening of the free trade system are key elements in economic recovery.

The ministers who met at the OECD a few weeks ago agreed on the necessity of taking advantage of the favourable conditions created by the recovery now under way to reverse the protectionist tendencies and to begin to progressively dismantle the restrictive measures necessitated by the recession. The Williamsburg Economic Summit scheduled to begin in a few days will also deal with the problems that confront international trade, by seeking to determine how these problems can be dealt with in a way that will bring lasting economic recovery and resolve the problem of indebtedness. The latter is a question of very current interest and was the subject of a recent meeting between the commerce and finance ministers of the Summit countries. No doubt it will be central to the debates of the sixth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, to be held in Belgrade in June.

These international meetings must produce more than statements in principle about the virtues of free trade. It is in the interest of our great trading nation that they lead to a concrete and realistic process by which to strengthen the multilateral trading system essential to our growth and prosperity.

In conclusion, let me say that this brief discussion of the main parameters that determine the Canadian trade environment and of the services provided by the government concerns only one facet of the question. The government is committed to developing foreign trade, but without a dynamic effort on your part there will be no improvement.