

# John T on the Memorandum to Cabinet By John Treleaven

The Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) has been and still is in the business of providing market intelligence to our clients. In his role of Trade Commissioner in 1896, John Larke was instructed "to collect and send to the Department information, both on the general trading requirements in Australia and on specific trade opportunities." In December 1993, Allen Kilpatrick challenged the TCS to "provide our clients with the information they need to develop their business strategies... information they cannot ignore; strategic information that is not general but targeted, information that results in changed corporate behaviour."

Now after paying much attention to supporting and advancing the role of TCS abroad, it is time that the federal government concentrate its attention on domestic delivery. Kilpatrick's message paved the way for a Memorandum to Cabinet (MC) on International Business Development (IBD). The MC idea arose last fall when DFAIT and Industry Canada worked together on the government's micro-economic action plan. Across government, there exists a confusing array of programs and players which do not always meet the needs of our clients. For example, it is not clear who has the lead in exporter preparation. There exists a lack of strategic management and partnerships between government departments' and agencies' international business development activities. Our domestic delivery system is in definite need of review.

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priority setting for our clients and for all federal and provincial departments interested in trade. What we have always done is motivate companies to continue seeking expansion opportunities

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abroad through the provision of market intelligence, introductions to key decision makers, advice and council on trade barriers, and negotiating strategies on ways to avoid or overcome those barriers.

The MC includes National Sector Teams which will focus on identifying and encouraging Canadian capability, and will share their data through WIN Exports. Regional Teams will share work on a variety of issues including

exporter preparation, filtering-in and IBD counselling. The Team Canada Sourcing Centre will treat timely trade leads as strategic assets, and draw on National Sector Teams and other sources to target companies whose interest in a particular opportunity will be determined by phone. The Advocacy Centre will build support more broadly from government and the private sector in pursuit of major capital projects.

The MC is not about process. It is not about bureaucracy. It is about impact. It is about Canada being the number one trading nation among the OECD countries. Cooperation among all the federal and provincial players in trade worked well for Team Canada when the Prime Minister was in China by generating billions of dollars of business contracts. If Canada is to reap the maximum benefit from the liberalizing global marketplace it must continue to work as effectively every day.

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## Postings: Yet another busy year!

SPT advises that since January there have been approximately 260 personnel movements involving trade officers (including moves in Ottawa). Of the 71 officers that have been posted abroad, 46 were from Canada, 20 were crossposted and five offi-



cers were seconded in to fill specialist positions abroad. New Canada-based trade positions were approved for Beirut, Guadalajara, Hanoi, Havana, Ho Chi Minh City, Montevideo, Panama, Rio de Janeiro and Taipei. There were also 18 extensions at post approved this year.