

INTRODUCTION

The traditional role of the Trade Commissioner Service (TCS) -- to facilitate Canadian exports -- has been a relatively focussed one which the TCS has executed with demonstrated competence. In the future however, such a focus may not be sufficient for Canadian economic prosperity.

As this paper will argue, the primary economic issue in Canada and the rest of the industrialized world, is and will be, job creation. The TCS has helped create Canadian jobs by helping Canadian businesses -- especially small and medium sized enterprises -- sell their goods and services elsewhere.

Canadian jobs are also created by firms (Canadian or otherwise) which make greenfield investment in Canada. Canadian jobs are lost when Canadian firms choose to invest in other countries, and when they import items which could be sourced domestically.

The TCS has traditionally played no direct role with respect to either import substitution or the encouragement of foreign direct investment into Canada. Both are arguably useful functions for someone to play. The focus of this paper will be on whether the TCS should play a role in facilitating foreign investment into Canada, and if so, what that role should be.

This paper is organized into three sections. The first will demonstrate, from a global perspective, why jobs are moving from North to South, and why this is the primary economic issue facing Canadians. The second section will explore why trade commissioners will be called upon to play an expanded role with respect to job creation in Canada, and how this could potentially include facilitating investment. The final section will introduce some of the specific questions which require resolution if the trade commissioner is to play a role in facilitating investment. These relate to the types of investments, the use of strategic alliances, and the role of technology.