

reinvesting profits from certain property sales in order to reduce rental costs.

I have done my utmost to avoid closing missions abroad. In fact, the Government is very interested in the possibility of finding innovative ways of extending our representation abroad. In particular, we are thinking of creating micro-missions, with one or two Canada-based employees supported by a larger mission located elsewhere. We are also considering new possibilities for joint leases with other countries, such as Australia.

Thus the main estimates for the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade for 1995-96 total \$1.3 billion, a reduction of \$104.9 million (7.5 per cent) from last year.

As I have said, in spite of the budgetary restraints we face, we must continue to fulfil our foreign policy objectives. We must exercise stricter control measures and constantly improve our management practices. Already the key objectives of the Department's employees are responsibility, cost reduction and better financial control.

As you know, our prosperity as a country depends on our ability to export and to conquer new markets. More than half of the Department's staff abroad are dedicated to the delivery of trade, economic and investment programs.

The recommendations on ways of making savings and recentring our resources were provided by the business community through a review of international trade headed by Mr. L. R. "Red" Wilson.

In order to follow through on the recommendations of this committee, we will restructure our Program for Export Market Development [PEMD] so that the main beneficiaries are the SMEs [small and medium-sized enterprises]. This restructuring alone will enable us to make savings in the order of \$7 million over three years.

I know that some of you are interested in the SMEs and are following with interest the new initiatives we have taken concerning them. We must not forget that the SMEs make up over 90 per cent of our clientele, and thus deserve increased support on our part. I do not intend to speak on behalf of my colleague, the Minister for International Trade, whom you will meet Thursday, but I would nonetheless like to outline a few of our initiatives in this area.

The Department has been working with the Export Development Corporation [EDC], the Canadian Commercial Corporation [CCC] and the banks in order to increase the financing available for small exporters. New programs have been or are being set up, including