

dian business community in the years ahead can perhaps best be illustrated by quoting the comments made to a Canadian journalist by a senior Iraqi official, Dr. Salah Kachichi, Director General of Industrial Development in the Ministry of Planning:

"We welcome Canadian firms in our development efforts. We want them to compete in our tenders. We want to buy their capital goods, technical know-how and managerial services. Dams, mining, electrical output, engineering industries, buildings, transportation and large civil engineering projects are only some of the fields in which Canadians should do well It will not be easy. You will have to compete with firms from other countries on your own merit. But Iraq has an enormous potential. We are determined to cooperate with the East and the West to pursue development at as fast a pace as possible."

It is, of course, difficult to quantify the potential of the Arab countries as an export market for Canadian goods and services in the short and medium terms. Differences in the planning cycles of the countries concerned, price fluctuations on world commodity markets, and a host of other factors all tend to make forecasting a rather hazardous business; only the broadest of estimates are available at this time. One such estimate suggests that the countries of the Arab world will import some \$950-billion worth of goods and services during the decade 1975-85; if Canada were to retain its current share of this market (1 per cent), the value of Canadian exports would reach \$9.5 billion over this period, or approximately \$1 billion a year averaged out over ten years.

This in itself would make the Arab world a significant export market for Canada. However, there is reason to believe that Canada can augment its share of the market, since: (a) Canadian firms are constantly acquiring more experience and expertise in doing business in Arab countries; (b) the Canadian Government is now devoting far greater resources than in the past to trade promotion in Arab countries; and (c) steps are being taken to help Canadian firms compete with larger international corporations to secure contracts for major projects, especially "turn-key" projects, requiring wide ranges of skills and important outlays of capital (e.g., the recent creation of the Centre for Joint Ventures in the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce).

During his visit to the Middle East earlier this year, Allan MacEachen spoke of "the declared policy of my Government to strengthen and expand Canada's relations with this region of the world". The process of strengthening Canada's economic relations with the Arab world is already off to a good start, and the future appears to hold considerable promise. The Arab countries seem likely to become increasingly important to Canada as trading partners, and as sources of essential energy resources and of investment capital. Canada, for its part, will probably take on added importance for the Arab countries, both as a trading partner and as a source of technical and economic co-operation. In short, prospects appear good for the consolidation and progressive expansion of mutually-beneficial bilateral economic relations between Canada and the countries of the Arab world.

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