

## Centre to aid Canadian business

Amid fears the world trading system may be in peril, a new research centre has been set up to collect information that could help Canadian business compete on the international stage.

The new International Business Research Centre, a separately funded division of the Ottawa-based Conference Board, recently set up shop with the financial backing of the federal, Ontario, Quebec and Alberta governments and 17 major private-sector organizations.

William Brock, interim chairman of the centre's advisory council and executive vice-president of the Toronto-Dominion Bank's international banking group, says a prime goal of the centre will be to build a base of relevant information that can be used by Canadian firms which deal abroad.

"The research will be directed toward the practical; it will have direct application to business," Brock said in a recent interview. Research could be used, for example, by Canadians working in other countries or by companies that wish to bid for work on foreign projects.

Brock says the centre's relationship with the highly regarded Conference Board, which is supported by businesses, government and unions, will be beneficial.

"The Conference Board is respected by the private sector. It has no axes to grind," says Brock.

Like the Conference Board, the centre will not take sides on an identified issue but will leave judgments up to the reader, says Brock. Charles Barrett, the centre's director, adds the centre will not make recommendations or take "an advocacy position on any particular subject".

Brock says much of the trade information sought is not available from one place anywhere in the country. "The Conference Board has put its finger on a very major gap."

Research will be conducted independently of the sponsoring organizations, such as the federal government, which has guaranteed \$150 000 a year for five years.

Among the subjects that are listed as priorities for investigation are Canada-US trade relations, concessional export financing, and structural changes in North American economies.

Brock says the centre, with a staff of five researchers and a budget of about \$1 million, may produce papers on such subjects as the implications for the

future of the recent US decision on Canadian lumber exports, the role of the Foreign Investment Review Agency and the national energy program, and the importance of basic industries to the overall economy.

The centre's advisory council held their inaugural meeting June 1 when US Embassy official, Richard Smith, spoke about trade between the two countries.

## Video display terminal study

Minister of Health and Welfare Monique Bégin has released a report on radiation emissions from video display terminals (VDTs). This document not only reviews surveys by other agencies but also reports on the detailed measurements performed by her department as part of its regulatory compliance activities. X-ray emissions have been measured in 227 VDTs, and none showed any emission above background levels.

Fifty-two units were measured in Health and Welfare's low level counting facility, which is capable of measuring x-ray emissions 500 000 times lower than the regulatory limit. Operation of the VDTs did not produce any detectable x-radiation. The level of visible light emitted is extremely low — some 200 times lower than the light level outdoors on a cloudy day.

Ultraviolet and infrared radiations have been shown to be either non-detectable or some 10 000 times below occupational exposure limits. No microwave radiation has ever been detected. Some low-frequency radiofrequency (RF) radiation has been detected very close to the surface of some VDTs. However, the levels fall off so rapidly with distance that, at the operator position, they are either undetectable or much lower than any occupational standard.

Some extremely low frequency (ELF) radiation emissions have been detected comparable with emissions from other common electrical devices, but once again no health hazard is involved.

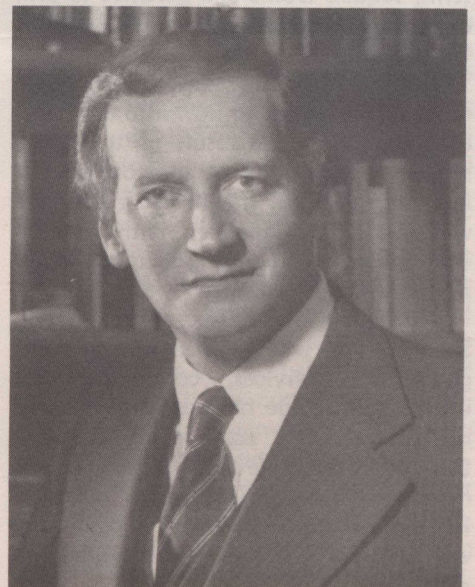
Mrs. Bégin emphasized that the findings were in agreement with test results obtained all over the world by reputable scientists. "This consensus leads to the unequivocal conclusion that video display terminals do not emit unacceptable levels of radiation," she said. "I want to assure all VDT operators that they are not exposed to a radiation health hazard."

## Car imports from Japan

Gerald Regan, Minister of State (International Trade), has announced that an understanding has been reached with Japan which will ensure that exports of Japanese passenger cars to the Canadian market will not exceed 153 000 units over fiscal year 1983-84 (April 1, 1983 to March 31, 1984). The understanding is based on an export forecast announced by the Japanese Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) that passenger car exports to Canada over the 15-month period, January 1, 1983 to March 31, 1984, will not exceed 202 600 units. It is understood that Japanese passenger car exports will not be concentrated in the last half of 1983.

Mr. Regan recalled that under an "interim" understanding reached last February, Japanese exports of passenger cars had been limited to 79 000 units over the period January 1, 1983 to June 30, 1983.

Mr. Regan noted that the Japanese undertaking would result in a decrease of approximately 19 000 units in fiscal year 1983-84 from the previous fiscal year period. He also noted that, based on the most recent Canadian industry market forecasts, the Japanese undertaking on passenger cars would result in a reduction of the import penetration of Japanese passenger cars in the Canadian market below 20 per cent over the level in 1983-84. He indicated that the understanding would "provide additional time for the Canadian industry to respond to the changing competitive situation in the Canadian market".



International Trade Minister Gerald Regan