

Aside from all of this, the Trade Commissioners have taken on two new tasks. One is to seek out and promote new foreign investment in Canada. The other is to be on the lookout for foreign technology that might be of benefit to Canada. We all know that the key to competition in industry is the development or access to new technology. It may mean the acquisition of a new machine that increases productivity, or the acquisition of know-how or of a new process. Trade Commissioners in developed countries will spend more and more of their time looking for this technology abroad, but they must know what the demand is in Canada. The governments, federal and provincial, can give them pointers, but it is the business community that can tell them better than anyone else what to look for.

Not all of our Trade Commissioners are stationed abroad. They're not all in remote, exotic outposts like Detroit. Indeed, the Trade Commissioners that may be most important to you, at least in the initial stages of your export process, are right here in Canada. In the capital of every Canadian province is an office of the Department of Regional Industrial Expansion. And in each DRIE office there are full-fledged, practicing Trade Commissioners.

These officials have hands-on experience of trade abroad. Most of them have worked abroad, and they know their colleagues around the world. The fact that they are on assignment with DRIE, that they work in your region and that they are up to date on the various government assistance programs available to entrepreneurs, as well, should give you some idea of how valuable they can be to you. They are as close to you as your telephone, and they can be the vital first step in putting you in touch with the world.

There is one special service I think you should know about. We run, in cooperation with DRIE, a summer student program that can be of direct and immediate use to you. The students in the program are bright and talented. Many of them come from M.B.A. programs or other business-related programs, and I would say that a lot of them will be Trade Commissioners in the future. We pay them, and we give them an intensive four-day training program, but after that we don't see very much of them. They spend their time with exporting firms, helping them with their exports. They do a variety of tasks.

Sometimes they're gophers, sometimes they're go-betweens, and always they're go-getters. They can make a real difference in your export programs, and I know that some