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YCDBSOYA?

If you have not guessed already, the initials on the briefcase in Vic's cartoon (Issue 2, page 4) come from the well known saying which George Hees, when he was Minister of Trade and Commerce, had inscribed on cufflinks to inspire "the troops".

The initials YCDBSOYA stand for "You Can't Do Business Sitting On Your Assets"



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FUTURE ISSUES:

As mentioned in our January bulletin, this issue includes a new feature, "Letters from Your Colleagues". This section will showcase your comments and suggestions on matters of common interest. Please send concise texts in letter format. Suitable letters will be published on a first come, first served basis. You may send your

letters to TOO by whatever method is the most convenient: E-Mail, Fax 613-996-8688, WP diskette or memo.

We will continue to publish quarterly.

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GROWING PAINS

Government-Industry Consultation Revisited

By Renée Umezuki

Dept. of External Affairs
Min. des Affaires extérieures

AUG 31 1994

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Finding out what the customer wants, as any business person will tell you, is of utmost importance. In government circles, "consultation" is equally crucial. It was with this goal in mind that the *International Trade Advisory Committee System* was born. Back in 1986, when the Department was looking ahead to upcoming FTA and MTN negotiations, it was decided that private sector advice would be critical to presenting a unified Canadian position in each negotiation and, more importantly, to obtaining the results that business desires and can use to its advantage. To facilitate an **on-going, confidential, two-way flow** of information and advice between the government and the private sector on international trade matters, and to ensure that government has the benefit of private sector views in its deliberations on international trade issues, the *International Trade Advisory Committee* (ITAC) and fifteen Sectoral Advisory Groups on International Trade (SAGITs) were created.

The ITAC, currently run under the stewardship of the well-known and colourful Mickey Cohen, advises on all international trade matters, including trade policy, market access, and trade development. Its 40 members are drawn from business, labour, consumer, cultural, research and academic communities, and are broadly representative of regional, sectoral, and demographic interests. The SAGITs, comprised of sectoral experts, were formed to ensure that sectoral views

are fully taken into account on international trade matters.

Since 1986, the ITAC and SAGITs have focused successively on the FTA, MTN and the NAFTA. Observers and participants generally agree that this structured, on-going consultative mechanism has worked well. On all three of these negotiations, both components of the advisory committee system worked closely with trade negotiators and acted as the main channel for communicating private sector views to the government. Minister MacLaren too has acknowledged the contributions of the ITAC and the SAGITs to the MTN process, noting in particular the value of members' advice during final Uruguay Round negotiations.

Since the final stages of the Uruguay Round, members have been encouraged to turn their attention to a broader range of issues. A host of on-going trade development and policy matters needing private sector attention and input were identified. ITAC Chairman Mickey Cohen has recently inspired the creation of three ITAC Task Forces — one focusing on trade policy, another on trade development, and a third on trade and the environment. These groups, made up both of current members of the ITAC and SAGITs, and of new members, will respond to the call in the Liberals' Red Book for some mechanism within the consultative system to specifically address the

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