

employment in Canada;

(c) To make better use of Canada's "multicultural advantage," SMEs should be aware of the particular market expertise of existing ethnocultural business associations, trade councils and community organizations. These can serve as important sources of information, assist in developing business contacts, and provide better guidance to the cultural dimensions of specific markets; and

(for b & c) The government endorses the recommendations citing the advantages derived by SMEs in dealing with qualified resources from Canada's ethnocultural business communities and Canadian Heritage has recently compiled an inventory of such resources. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada has prepared a study of the Canadian ethnic food market to increase knowledge of this domestic market. This domestic ethnic market could serve as a "test market" for SMEs prior to exporting.

(d) When Canadian SMEs are exploring international markets, they should take full advantage of Canada's geographic position next to one of the world's richest markets south of its border, its proximity to the world's fastest growing markets in the Asia-Pacific, and its Atlantic connections to European Union markets, as well as the growing market in the Arctic. (page 40)

The government agrees with Committee's recommendations. This is why in his speech to the Canadian Exporters Association in October 1995, previous International Trade Minister Roy MacLaren noted the government would offer enhanced support in certain key areas. After consultation with the private sector, and consideration of the opportunities for SMEs, priorities will include market opportunities south of the border, fast growing markets in the Asia-Pacific, and the European Union markets. Furthermore, as Canada will host the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in 1997, and the government has declared 1997 to be Canada's Year of Asia Pacific, efforts will be especially made to assist Canadian SMEs to take advantage of the opportunities this presents to access Asia Pacific regions.

For the first time, Canada's International Business Strategy (CIBS) will have an Aboriginal Products, Services and Technologies chapter, the result of a new Aboriginal National Sector Team. In 1994, Aboriginal Business Canada (ABC), an Industry Canada program with a mandate to support Aboriginal business development, organized a round table with 40 Aboriginal business leaders to elicit their views on developing approaches to support market expansion and export trade. The discussions indicated the need for a special focus to encourage successful Aboriginal companies to access international trade opportunities. In 1995, ABC launched the Aboriginal Trade and Market Expansion Initiative to help successful Aboriginal companies expand their markets domestically and abroad. As a follow-up to the original round table, a study was carried out to establish an inventory of Aboriginal export-active, export-ready and export-capable companies. The study identified the needs of Aboriginal exporters and gaps in the trade development effort. During the last half of 1995 and early 1996, Aboriginal Business Canada, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, the Department of Indian and Northern Development, Heritage Canada and others at the federal, provincial and territorial levels worked with a number of export-ready companies to participate in export marketing missions, promotion and training.

Within the new Aboriginal National Sector Team a "North of 60" team is being formed to focus on exports from the geographic area north of 60 degrees. The team will address trade in a variety of sectors, identify exporters needs, and develop strategies to promote Aboriginal exports from the region. The creation of the Arctic Council this summer will offer opportunities to enhance circumpolar trade. Canada is actively involved in the Arctic Sustainable Development Initiative, and will host the Sustainable Development Conference during the winter of 96/97.

15. The Committee recommends that the federal government continue to use all means at its disposal, including the possibility of suspending bilateral aid measures, to secure the protection of Canadian citizens involved in trade and commercial disputes outside of Canada and, where possible, to conclude consular agreements to this end. (page 41)