

The Centenary of the Trade Commissioner Service

Now is the time to begin to gear up for the 21st century: the function of our trade commissioners must continue to evolve with the rapidly changing needs of the Canadian business community.

By Martine Joly

David C. Knowles of Trade Development Operations (TOO) is the focal point for planning the Centenary. The following is based on the conversations I had with him.

The first professional Trade Commissioner

It was December 1894 when John Short Larke, Canada's first professional Trade Commissioner, sailed to Australia; he landed in Sydney in January 1895.

The Editor and owner of the *Oshawa Vindicator* newspaper, Mr. Larke was also an excellent speaker, an active participant in municipal affairs and a friend of John A. Macdonald. Mackenzie Bowell, then Minister of Trade and Commerce, described him as a man with an extensive knowledge of Canada's industries and resources (O. Mary Hill, Canada's Salesman to the World).

Being our first Trade Commissioner, John Larke has been chosen to personify the Service.

Looking Toward the 21st Century

The Centenary offers an opportunity to raise awareness among companies, especially SMEs, of the benefits of internationalization and the vital role played by our trade commissioners, especially where market intelligence is concerned. Above all, this event will allow us to look toward the 21st century, as the function of the trade commissioner must continue to evolve with the rapidly changing needs of Canada's business community.

The highlight events of the Centenary

The kickoff of Canadian and international celebrations will take place at the Pearson Building in January 1994, in the

form of a PAFSO-sponsored panel discussion and conference involving various generations of trade commissioners. The InfoEx centre, in the lobby of the Pearson building, will be officially named in honour of John Larke.

Throughout the year there will be panel discussions in the Centres of International Business Studies across Canada on a wide range of topics including market globalization, the new international trade environment, the trade commissioner as an agent of change, the development of a commercial culture, and more. These panel discussions will provide the TCS with feedback on changing needs and expectations in the business environment.

In the course of their regular activities, trade commissioners visiting Canada will participate in events in which the Centenary will receive special emphasis. These events and many others (designing a Centenary logo, brochures, videos, etc.) will be organized in cooperation with the Communications Branch.

October 1994 will see a national conference in Toronto to which the private sector will be invited, and this will be linked to the Export Awards ceremony and the annual CEA convention. Canada and Australia will also explore various ways of celebrating the 100th year of the arrival of John S. Larke in 1895 which enhanced their trade relationship.

Whether you are in Ottawa or posted abroad, Canada-based or a locally-engaged staff member, the Centenary will provide an opportunity to show that we are all aiming at the same target of excellence and team spirit as the Trade Commissioner Service looks ahead to its second century.

Be Part of a Winning Team:

The 1994 Canada Export Award Program

The Canada Export Award Secretariat is seeking nominations from all readers of companies that they feel deserve the recognition of this award.

The primary eligibility requirement for entry is that a company must have been exporting goods and services for three or more consecutive years (1993, 1992, 1991). Upon receipt of your nominations, Trade Development Operations (TOO) will send a letter to the company announcing that they were nominated and asking that they complete the award questionnaire.

Nominations should be sent to TOO/Hexter by April 15, 1994.