

today's strongest job-creation sector — small and medium size enterprises.

As part of the Government's commitment to small and medium size enterprises, or SMEs, officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade have been instructed to explore ways to encourage more SMEs to do business globally. They have been asked to pay particular attention to how our federal international business development support could be structured to respond better to SMEs' needs. Officials of several federal departments are now engaged in an extensive review of the financing requirements of SMEs, including export financing.

Those of you who are familiar with the Trade Commissioner Service may be aware that 1994 marks its 100th anniversary. It was in 1894 that Canada's first professional Trade Commissioner, John S. Larke, was sent to Australia where he served for 15 years. At the time, the order-in-council authorizing their creation specified that Trade Commissioners were appointed "for the purpose of collecting information, and with whom correspondence may be had by Canadians interested in trade with the countries in which they reside." Although that definition continues to apply today, I'm sure you will agree that the world in which today's Trade Commissioners operate is vastly different from the one John Larke faced in 1894.

On the occasion of its centenary, the Government is committed to reexamining the role of the Trade Commissioner Service and we are eager to have the input of the Canadian business community in this effort. A series of mini-conferences is planned under the title "Launching the Second Century" to obtain the views of business across Canada and abroad on a number of topics bearing on the future of the Trade Commissioner Service. These discussions will culminate in a national conference in Toronto on October 3, to immediately precede the 51st annual convention of the Canadian Exporters' Association and the 12th annual Canada Export Award ceremony.

The Trade Commissioner Service is the most tangible and strategic network the federal government has to offer Canadian business engaged in international business development. We are committed to increasing its effectiveness in serving Canadian companies. We are determined to provide you with better market intelligence. We are determined to better serve the special needs of SMEs. We are also determined that you will find trade commissioners in the places and at the times you need them most. Above all, the Trade Commissioner Service will continue to strive for excellence as it looks forward to another century of service to Canada and to Canadian exporters.

Thank you.