

## 100 Years of Service — from page 3

and in 128 countries around the globe.

Trade commissioners link Canadian exporters with foreign buyers. They also manage and arrange trade shows and tackle market access issues. This results in improved sales, strategic alliances, more foreign investment, technology transfers and better market intelligence — all of which lead to job creation in Canada.

The way trade is conducted has developed over the century, says Allen Kilpatrick, Deputy Minister for International Trade with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). "Trade commissioners are now more involved in setting up joint ventures and strategic alliances between companies in different countries," he said. "They have to provide added value to their clients, Canadian companies. They have to ensure they provide information that is not readily available from the myriad of computerized data that now exists."

And today, competition is stiffer, thanks to collapsing global trade barriers and emerging market places, says Kilpatrick, a career trade commissioner who joined the Service in 1962. He says that as the world gets smaller, because of technological breakthroughs in communications and transportation, the competition among countries fighting for a piece of lucrative, new markets is growing fiercer.

But though the market has changed drastically, the Canadian Trade Commissioner Service's mandate has not. "What Canadian industry wanted from John Larke 100 years ago is essentially what industry demands from us today," said John Treleaven, DFAIT's Director General of the Trade Planning and Operations Bureau. "They want such market intelligence as the best distribution channels for their products, the types of opportunities available, and how a country operates in terms of both

business and culture."

### Provides access

The Trade Commissioner Service provides valuable insight into new and complex markets such as China, says Red Wilson, Chairman of BCE Inc., the parent company of telecommunications powerhouses Bell Canada, Bell Canada International, Northern Telecom and Bell-Northern Research.

"Northern Telecom and Bell Canada International are actively involved with Canadian embassies in many countries," said Wilson, a former trade commissioner. "We rely on them, especially in locations where we're operating for the first time, for local intelligence such as key contact people and competitive information about non-Canadian companies doing business there. Also, the embassy staff is usually very well-connected to senior foreign government officials, and can often set up meetings for us that we couldn't obtain ourselves."

Ed Swift agrees. "If you go hand-in-hand to a meeting with a trade commissioner, you carry more clout than if you go in on your own, especially in ASEAN countries where government-to-government relations are very important," he said. "Your credibility definitely rises."

But though the Trade Commissioner Service has helped set up crucial interviews as well as provide solid market intelligence, Swift says the little gestures count just as much. "They make my life so much easier when I'm abroad on business," he said. "Small details, like helping me build my

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## Trade Commissioner Vignettes

TRADE COMMISSIONERS are adapting to the many changes occurring in the world economy. But Susan Cartwright, Senior Departmental Assistant in the Office of the Minister for International Trade, says, "In adapting to the changes that face us all, Trade Commissioners are clearly focussed on the needs of our clients and how best to address them."

THERE IS NO OTHER JOB that I can think of where all your smarts, all your creativity is needed ... Sometimes you're trying to sell potatoes in the morning, submarines in the afternoon and bicycles in between and selling a consulting job for a big shipyard after that. The job has incredible challenge.

*(Trade commissioner vignettes taken from departmental files and a book-in-progress by Oli Cosgrove)*