

to some degree or other, and the institutional memory has been good to date.

The second function is carried out by the Trade Commissioners Service. The TIS Division along with the geographic Branches constitute the home base for this operation. The clientele is the private sector, and direct contact with the posts is the accepted method of operation.

The activities of the third category are no doubt the most difficult to manage, and also about which there are many questions about their utility. The monitoring of both leading-edge and best-practice technologies is already being carried out through existing mechanisms such as personal contact, conferences, scientific and trade journals, trade shows, etc. and it is argued that reports prepared by non-experts in the field cannot add anything of significance. The experience of countries, such as Sweden and the Netherlands, who have industry-oriented technical attaché systems in place, would suggest the contrary. What is clear, however, is that for such reporting to have value, the science and technology counsellors must have clear directions from the user groups. What is lacking at present are a method of determining the detailed requirements of the client group, as well as an effective method of disseminating the reporting output of the posts.

One method of providing such direction would be through the creation of an advisory body reporting to the head of the home base unit, with membership from industry associations, federal and provincial governments, and universities, to prepare a clear and concise annual statement identifying sectors of importance, and delineating those aspects where timely reporting would be of value. It is equally important to establish effective information dissemination mechanisms. The general feeling is that the creation of a newsletter for this purpose would be futile. Also it is impractical to send all Embassy reports directly to all potential clients. What is required in the home base is the ability to critically assess the information and to shape it to meet the needs of the gatekeepers of the existing domestic information channels.

It is clear that, no matter what methods are used for the dissemination and distribution of technological information from abroad, information handling experts would be required in the home base.