

PART IV.—THE GOVERNMENT AND FOREIGN TRADE

Section 1.—Foreign Trade Service and Associated Agencies concerned with the Development of Foreign Trade*

Foreign trade contributes substantially to the welfare and prosperity of Canadians, largely because the productive capacity of Canada is greater than the ability of its population to consume the output of farms, factories, forests, fisheries and mines. Every effort is made, therefore, to establish and maintain close commercial relations with other countries whose markets are essential to the Canadian economy. It is appreciated, however, that two-way trade should be encouraged in order that goods and services may be accepted in partial payment for the products Canada is in a position to export. Furthermore, many commodities that are not indigenous to this country must be imported. Some of these are required for industrial processes and others may be classed as consumer goods necessary for the maintenance of the Canadian standard of living.

Although many private firms have established connections in other countries that enable them to maintain a steady flow of goods in either direction, others require the assistance of government agencies in finding markets or sources of supply. Import and export controls imposed by many countries for a variety of reasons, together with postwar foreign exchange difficulties, present problems that no single firm or even an association of manufacturers, exporters or importers can solve without assistance from government representatives.

The Department of Trade and Commerce and associated agencies are at the disposal of exporters and importers engaged directly in the development of Canada's commercial relations with other countries. Services obtainable from the various branches, divisions and agencies are described below.

Agriculture and Fisheries Branch.—The primary role of this Branch is to promote the sale of agricultural and fisheries products to overseas markets. It operates through three commodity divisions—the Grain Division, the Fisheries Division and the Food and Agriculture Division—each of which is staffed by specialists in its particular field. The Branch is in close touch with other government departments, both federal and provincial, and with all industry organizations representing producers and processors. It takes an active part in international meetings concerned with agricultural problems, including the Food and Agriculture Organization, as well as in inter-departmental and industry association meetings.

The Branch carries on trade promotional activities and assists Canadian exporters in many ways. Canadian firms are kept informed on market conditions and requirements in foreign countries, competition from other sources of supply, and exchange and tariff restrictions. Information is provided on sanitary and food and drug regulations in other countries and on related topics.

Commodity officers assist industry in participating in trade fairs abroad and help organize trade missions to foreign countries where these may be beneficial in stimulating exports of Canadian agricultural products. Surveys on markets abroad are made on request from industry, or are initiated by the Branch when information obtained from trade commissioners indicates that opportunities for trade in certain products exist in their territories. Up-to-date information on Canadian production, prices, availability of goods for export, and other related details is supplied to trade commissioners to assist them in assessing the market potential in their areas. The Trade Commissioner Service includes a number of officers with agricultural training who are assigned to posts, selected in consultation with the Departments of Agriculture and Fisheries, where their training and

* Prepared in the several branches concerned and collated in the Trade Publicity Branch, Department of Trade and Commerce, Ottawa. The work of the Standards Branch and the Small Business Branch of the Department, which are concerned with domestic matters only, is dealt with in the Domestic Trade Chapter, pp. 930-932.