



bilateral programs, I can already sense more and more Canadian entrepreneurs becoming interested and investing here. This is a new phenomenon because in the past most of those that came here were government-assisted through some kind of program, but now more and more are interested to come and see market possibilities. There are huge market possibilities and potential here; it is worth it to have a good look.



Madame Elaine Mathys

One of the very first enterprises that launched ahead here in Ukraine was CanBear. They are operating a mini-supermarket in Dnipropetrovsk and although they have been facing tremendous obstacles, they are certainly a flag-ship in terms

of these mini-supermarkets that are flourishing all over Ukraine. That was a good example of some Canadian businessmen putting some money together and saying, "Yes, it is worth it - it is worth it to do something in Ukraine!"

More and more we are starting to see the progress in the building of homes and houses and in areas like oil and gas. Eventually the agricultural sector will come around, but that is an area which is more difficult to pierce simply because agriculture has been left in the hands of very conservative minds here. Unfortunately they are still clinging to the "hoe and compost" system and privatization has not really gone through. That is a very real problem, but eventually agriculture will be a very natural area in which Canada will be able to cooperate with Ukraine. In fact on a more private basis there has been some exchanges already with agricultural people from Saskatchewan and Alberta. That is well and good but often these people come back here and they are not in a position to implement change because the system does not allow them to do it. But all that is going to change through a land privatization program which is already being examined by the Cabinet of Ministers and will be submitted to Parliament. But you know there will be resistance. In Ukraine there is the impression that when you talk about privatizing land and when you talk about selling land - it is a bit like selling heart and soul, almost as if the land will be taken away

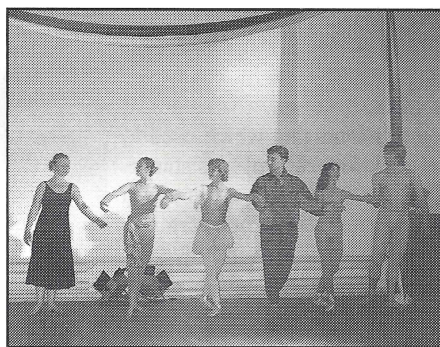
by the foreigner or whoever buys it and it will no longer be Ukrainian. Land is very important here, as it was to the first Ukrainian settlers to Canada. So that is a little bit of the same psychological background here.

There you have the main priorities - technical cooperation, trade certainly - with a switch-over to trade in 3 to 4 years. Slowly we would be phasing and refocussing our programs. But for the moment we are certainly dealing with training of senior administrators. As another example, health is also an area which is receiving a large proportion of our assistance.

The vision of Ukraine is a very fluid notion still, but it is taking some kind of shape and, after all, it is only three years old, so that is not abnormal. People had totally different views 3 or 4 years ago about where Ukraine should be, what it should be, and where it should go. Now, I feel that there is a more common vision, including in Parliament, of what this place should be, as well as a very good deal of pride about being able to solve problems peacefully. No tanks, no army, no bloodshed, and frankly, that's very encouraging. And that shows that Ukrainians are a very different country from their neighbours. Ukrainians are different - they talk a lot, they argue a lot - we are a bit like that in French-Canada, so I can understand that. Yet when it is necessary for some kind of compromise, it is usually reached.

There are a lot of reasons to be in despair here, a lot of reasons. Teachers are not being paid, miners are not being paid, and social explosions could easily be justified. But it does not happen; it just does not happen.

What needs to be done quickly is to make



Madame Mathys remained active throughout the Ambassador's stay in Ukraine, organizing a school of modern ballet in Kyiv. Members of the school dedicated a special final presentation to her attended by many ambassadors and guests.

sure that conditions in Russia and Ukraine are not too different. That would create a tremendous pressure on Ukraine, especially in Eastern Ukraine. There is already an erosion there now, not too significant, but there is an erosion. In the end, I think these two countries will have to learn to live together, which is not quite the case now. They need each other as equals, not as a big brother and a little sister, as in the past. Not as Russia and Little Russia, as Ukraine used to be known. This is a challenge for both leaders, but I think Kuchma understands that, and even in Russia this is starting to be perceived as the case. Quarrelling and petty disputes are useless and groundless. The quality of the fabric of the people, the intimacy of links between Russians and Ukrainians is absolutely striking. More so in the eastern part of Ukraine, but even in the western part. It's natural, it can be explained, but it is really striking. The moment something happens in Russia - for example Chechnya - you can be sure families are afflicted here because they have relatives there. They have relatives whose sons are sent there - although very reluctantly. This social fabric is very striking.

Unfortunately my term here comes to an end. I say unfortunately, and I mean it.

In parting, I would like to thank the Canadian people for the support they have given me at all times. They were, at first, almost the only visitors to come to Kyiv, with very few government visitors, and so we certainly appreciated our Canadian citizens' visits. I intend to share with Canadians my impression of my three years, and that will be arranged through a speaking tour in Canada later this year. It will be tied with my cross-Canada program involving Norway, which is my next assignment. I want to reiterate to Canadians the value of their support to this government. In fact, they could do even more - the more the better. Nevertheless, their support is very important for this government; they know it and the President knows it here.

As for Ukrainian business people - be a bit more daring. Conditions are improving rapidly here. Of course, they won't soon reach the quality and level of the Canadian economy, although we have our own problems too. But it is worth taking a good hard look at the market potential. It is really worth it.