

# Information services and public relations

The sophistication of mass communications since the Second World War has made public opinion an increasingly significant factor in the formation of the foreign policy of many governments, and this has affected the conduct of international diplomacy. Today, it is often no longer enough for an ambassador to explain his country's views to foreign ministers and officials; he may also find it necessary to inform the general public, or special sections of it, in his area of accreditation.

During the year, all Canadian embassies, high commissions and consulates undertook some kind of press and information program. Such activity was most intense in the United States, Western Europe and Japan, because of the importance these areas have had for Canada and the benefits it has expected from the dissemination there of Canadian information.

The general direction of the press and information program abroad was the responsibility of the Department in Ottawa. A large variety of information materials was produced at headquarters, and a wide range of projects was devised to convey the messages of the Government's information program to particular foreign audiences in terms suited to their special interests. Much of this work consisted of answering inquiries and distributing materials reflecting Canadian policy and interests in various regions. Films, exhibits, audio-visual aids, publications, speeches and seminars were employed in the effort to foster a clearer understanding of Canadian aims, policies and achievements by "priority" audiences. In general, the purpose of this activity was to project an image of Canada abroad as a distinctive, sophisticated and stable society that had much to offer the rest of the world and to inform the foreign public of developments in federal-provincial relations.

For their local programs Canadian posts received briefing materials on government policy for use in contact with foreign governments, the news media and the public. To this end they were sent texts of statements and speeches, press scans and press-guidance and background materials on a variety of domestic and foreign-policy issues, including the economic situation in Canada, northern pipelines, Canadian nuclear policies and human rights questions.

## Publications

The Department produced a broad selection of publications - in English, French and a number of foreign languages - on Canadian themes, directed at selected audiences. In 1977 these included a book on Canadian involvement in the United Nations during the 30 years since its creation, and a booklet on Canada and the Commonwealth. The periodical *Canada Weekly* was distributed (on request) in English, French, German and Spanish versions to some 20,000 readers throughout the world. About a quarter of a million copies of the booklet *Facts on Canada* were distributed abroad in 11 languages. Illustrated articles and photo-stories were prepared for publications issued by a number of Canadian posts in local languages or for submission to foreign publications. Press kits were prepared for journalists accompanying Canadian ministers on visits abroad or attending international conferences, and for journalists visiting Canada with foreign leaders. Nearly 600 journalists and "opinion-formers" were brought to Canada from 48 countries for briefings and familiarization tours. Background material was prepared for speech-makers, and lecture tours by Canadians were arranged at home and abroad in support of specific objectives.

The bimonthly *International Perspectives*, a journal of informed opinion on Canada's role in world affairs and on current international questions, has become well established during the six years of its existence. Its distinctive feature has been the policy of opening its pages to free expression of opinion by specialists - foreign as well as Canadian - on various aspects of international affairs.

## Films, television and exhibits

Television having become an information medium of prime importance in many parts of the world, efforts were made by the Department to take advantage of the opportunities it afforded. For example, the Department supported the production of