

□ INTERVIEW □

Canada is hosting three summits in the coming months: the Francophone Summit, the Commonwealth Summit and the Economic Summit. To find out more about the way in which these major international events are organized, Liaison met with Gilles Mathieu, the Executive Director of the Summits Management Office.

Sylvie Gauvin : *Canada is going to be hosting three major international summits in the coming months. Would you briefly describe each of them?*

Gilles Mathieu : Let's look at them in order. The first will be the Francophone Summit in Quebec City between September 2 and 4. For this summit, Canada as a whole is extending the invitation, while the federal and Quebec governments are the host governments. New Brunswick is also participating and is contributing 5% of the overall budget. Canada is contributing 50%, and Quebec, 45%. The federal government is paying for the security, which is the responsibility of the RCMP.

This summit has two phases: one consists of a discussion of foreign policy and international economic affairs, and the other deals with cooperation among the Francophone countries. Mr. Mulroney will chair the first phase, and with the agreement of the assembly will ask Mr. Bourassa to chair the second.

The Commonwealth Summit will take place between October 13 and 17, 1987 in Vancouver. On paper there will be 41 delegations to the Francophone Summit, and 48 to the Commonwealth Summit. The agenda is prepared long beforehand in conjunction with the Commonwealth Secretariat. It includes political and economic aspects and the regular Commonwealth cooperation programs.

The Economic Summit will take place next June in Toronto.

S. G. : *Are the procedures for organizing the summits roughly the same?*

Important international events generate a great deal of visibility for Canada. It puts you on the map in no uncertain terms. The impact is felt internationally. Moreover, Canada is the only country involved in all three summits.

G. M. : No, they are quite different. The Francophone Summit is only the second in the series, while the Commonwealth Summits have been going on for some time. The Commonwealth Summit is a well-established operation. It has a handbook of instructions setting forth the organizational details and the standards. By contrast there has only been one Francophone Summit, the one in Paris, and it was organized very hastily, with only two or three months' notice. It has no long-standing rules. Thus organizing it requires sound judgment and initiative.

S. G. : *Could they not use the Commonwealth handbook of instructions to prepare for the Francophone Summit?*

G. M. : They did bear in mind the Commonwealth procedure when the Paris Summit was on. It was not followed slavishly, but it did give them some guidelines. The Quebec City Summit will have its own particular structure, bearing in mind that what we do there might serve as a precedent for future summits.

S. G. : *Why are all three summits being held in Canada?*

G. M. : Looking at the Economic Summit first, it's our turn. There are seven member countries, which means that we are the host every seven years. The most recent Economic Summit was held (here) in 1981, making it our turn again in 1988. There was a Commonwealth Summit in Canada in 1973, and we have offered our services again this year.

As for the Francophone Summit, the first one was held in Paris. This got the concept off the ground, and it made sense for the second summit, which will consolidate the idea to some extent, to be held here in Canada. Canada stands second only to France among the countries most interested in seeing La Francophonie prosper.

We are having all three because it's a coincidence that the Economic Summit is coming in 1988, and it's more or less our turn to hold the Commonwealth Summit. As for the Francophone Summit, we felt that a contribution needed to be made at this crucial time. And so we end up hosting the three summits.

S. G. : *Preparing for the summits must be quite an involved process.*