

ENVIRONMENTAL RELATIONS

Canada and the United States have an extensive track record on environmental relations, dating back beyond the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty and the creation of the International Joint Commission. Although serious issues have arisen over the years, the relationship has more often been characterized by cooperation than by conflict. On multilateral environmental matters, the two countries have worked together effectively and well, often to the benefit of the larger global community. Moreover, when faced with major differences, Canada and the United States have usually found constructive and innovative ways to resolve them, as in the clean-up of the Great Lakes, once the major environmental irritant between the two countries.

Acid Rain

Acid rain affects over one million square miles of eastern Canada, where the resource base directly sustains eight per cent of our gross national product. 14,000 lakes are acidified, 150,000 others are being damaged, and 300,000 are vulnerable. Over 50 per cent of eastern Canada's forests, which produce \$14 billion worth of products, are threatened. Over 80 per cent of all Canadians live in areas with high acid rain-related pollution levels; Canadian and US studies indicated an association between this pollution and respiratory problems in children and asthmatics.

Canada cannot solve the problem on its own. More than half of the acid rain in eastern Canada comes from the United States and, in some areas, US emissions cause 70 per cent of the acid fallout. Canada has put in place a comprehensive national acid rain control program. It has three objectives: to reduce the damage we are causing to ourselves; to demonstrate Canada's commitment to contributing to a joint solution, and to reduce the damage done by Canadian emissions in the northern United States.

Since 1979, Canada has sought an air quality agreement with the United States to permit each country to come to grips with the acid rain problem, and with other problems which may arise in future. Canada is convinced that the most effective way to deal with acid rain is to negotiate a bilateral accord with the United States that would include specific targets and time-tables designed to reduce emissions to environmentally safe levels and keep them there.