

EDINBURGH (October 21) -- The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, announced today that his department will implement a new five-year plan recently approved by the government to expand and diversify Canada's cultural relations with other countries.

"Cultural interest and activity in Canada is enjoying a period of unprecedented vigour," said Mr. MacEachen. "It was plain that this growth and diversification should be reflected in the foreign policy of our government, so as to project on the international scene the breadth, depth and creativity of Canadian cultural activities."

For these reasons, the minister went on to say, and subject to the budgetary restraint which current economic conditions may force it to exercise in the next few years, the Government will therefore attempt to expand and diversify Canada's foreign cultural exchanges.

"You may well ask what the Canadian Government hopes to achieve by this wider projection of Canadian cultural interests and activities on the international scene," Mr. MacEachen continued. "I suppose most of all we see this as a new way of testing the qualities of our own achievements as a nation. We believe there are valuable mutual benefits to be gained when countries share not only their separate cultural experiences, at as many levels of people-contact as possible, but also their cultural judgements and critical analyses, favourable or otherwise."

"We in government are aware that culture is not something created by an Act of Parliament -- not even the Parliament at Westminster. It flows from the minds and spirits of the individuals who make up a society, a nation. Institutions, governmental and otherwise, can offer encouragement and open new opportunities for cultural endeavours; but only individuals can create those works that go into the formation of a nation's cultural heritage."

The Canadian minister is in Scotland at the invitation of the Foundation for Canadian Studies in the United Kingdom and of the University of Edinburgh. He attended today the inauguration of this university's new chair and Centre of Canadian Studies. The inaugural lecture "Movement of People and Movement of Ideas", was given by Professor Ian Drummond, from the University of Toronto. Mr. MacEachen attended earlier the second board meeting of the foundation, which has endowed Edinburgh University's new chair and centre; he also opened an exhibition of Canadiana at the University Library. The minister's visit to Edinburgh was preceded by a stopover in London during which he was the guest at a luncheon given by the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. James Callaghan.

"An important dimension of our five-year plan is the development of Canadian studies abroad," Mr. MacEachen said at the inauguration. "So too is our support for the efforts of British academics to develop a network of Canadian courses in British universities."