

Canada ratifies agreement on polar bear conservation

Canada has ratified an international agreement for the conservation of polar bears, Environment Minister Jeanne Sauvé announced last month, which enters into force 90 days after ratification by three of the signatories. Canada, Denmark, Norway and the United States signed the agreement in Oslo, November 1973, and the U.S.S.R. joined in February 1974.

The agreement provides for better collaboration among the Arctic nations in the research and management of polar bears which cross international boundaries. It also prohibits hunting in international waters of the bears, which sometimes live on pack ice far out at sea.

In Canada, management of polar bears is the responsibility of the provincial and territorial governments. Parts of Newfoundland, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, the Yukon and the Northwest Territories are the natural habitat for the animals. These governments have concurred in the ratification, which is accompanied by a declaration that clarifies Canada's position on management, research and native peoples' hunting rights.

Unlike the situation in other signatory countries, where the species is considered endangered, the population in Canada is thought to be healthy. Con-



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Polar bear mother and cubs in Churchill, Manitoba.

sequently, sound management principles rather than a rigid form of protection is emphasized in the Canadian declaration.

Hunting rights

Traditional native hunting rights are recognized in the agreement because of Canada's initiative. In Canada, Inuit and Indian settlements are allotted a maximum annual kill quota for each sub-population of polar bear. These quotas are based on data gathered by the Federal-Provincial Technical Committee for Polar Bear

Research and Management. If a settlement does not wish to use its entire quota, it can sell a polar bear permit from its quota to non-native hunters. The hunts, however, must be carried out with a native guide, using a dog team and traditional native methods.

Article IV of the agreement prohibits the use of aircraft and motor vehicles in the capture or killing of polar bears. The intention of this article, as Canada interprets it, is to prohibit hunters from using these vehicles, not to prevent their being used with care in research and management operations.

Ottawa and provinces to consult on number of foreign student admissions

Manpower and Immigration Minister Robert Andras said last month that half of the provinces had reacted favourably to his recent call for federal-provincial consultation and cooperation for the development of clearer guide-lines for managing the flow of foreign students into Canada.

"I am very pleased that the provinces have reacted so quickly and positively to my request and I have every confidence that the remaining provinces will soon join in this venture," said Mr. Andras.

At press time, Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia and Quebec had replied to the Minister's invitation.

"There has been much discussion recently of foreign students in Canada,"

said Mr. Andras. "Students who study abroad bring benefit to almost every sector of their own society when they return. Canada has gained from this international exchange as much as any other country.

"While we recognize some abuses of student status, I am concerned that we do not over-react in a way that would hinder the international flow of knowledge, ideas and understanding, a sharing process from which Canadian students have also greatly benefited," continued the Minister.

In the past, some provinces have made representations to the Federal Government requesting that limits be set on the number of students from abroad.

The Minister pointed out that there was a clear division of responsibility in this area. "The field of education is a provincial responsibility, and therefore, we cannot limit the number of foreign students enrolling at the various institutions. Neither can the provinces assume responsibility for deciding which students are admissible to Canada — this function is a federal one," he said.

At present, any student admitted into Canada must meet several requirements which include: (1) good character and good health; (2) a valid passport and Canadian non-immigrant visa when necessary; (3) evidence of sufficient funds for maintenance while attending school in Canada, for tuition fees and for all other expenses; and (4) a letter