

## Canada urges global action to combat environmental hazards

International environment problems are too serious to be left to narrowly defined self-interest, stated federal Environment minister Charles Caccia at a conference in Toronto recently.

Indicating that world action may be the only solution, Mr. Caccia suggested that the United Nations may have to take on the role of protecting the planet from environmental dangers as varied as acid rain and desertification (the impact of droughts and floods on the environment).

"Perhaps it is time for the nations of the world to realize that the very existence of human beings on the planet is becoming precarious," Mr. Caccia said in an address to the sixth annual Applied Geography Conference at Ryerson Polytechnical In-



Charles Caccia

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stitute in Toronto on October 14.

"Perhaps only a global organization such as the UN, if it can be made to work effectively, can truly oversee our common biosphere," Mr. Caccia said.

Mr. Caccia said the commitment between Canada and the US to clean up the Great Lakes can and should be expanded until it is global in scale. Yet all too often, global problems, because they are the responsibility of everyone, end up being the responsibility of no one, he said.

### Grave problems

DDT banned in Canada and the United States for more than 20 years is still found in the Great Lakes, borne in the atmosphere from countries thousands of miles away.

Acid rain and toxic chemicals are well known global environmental problems. "Others may seem remote to us here in North America ... but are no less grave."

The increase of carbon dioxide in the earth's atmosphere, from car and truck

exhaust fumes and factory smokestacks might extend Canada's growing season.

"But there is also the possibility that it could turn our prairie provinces into a Thirties style dustbowl," said Mr. Caccia.

Among environmental hazards Mr. Caccia cited as threatening the planet are:

- the destruction of tropical rain forests, which if unchecked will shrink the planet's genetic pool by depriving the earth of one million of its five to ten million species of organisms by the turn of the century;
- desertification, the transformation of jungle and arable land into desert as hungry populations and drought render the land arid;
- the impact of droughts and floods on the environment;
- loss of agricultural land;
- population growth and urbanization;
- problems in meeting energy needs.

On domestic matters, Mr. Caccia told his audience that although controlling acid rain and cleaning up toxic chemicals in the Great Lakes are not going to be cheap, "we really have no choice".

## SSEA reaffirms NATO support

External Affairs Minister Allan MacEachen said after his recent meetings with US Secretary of State George Shultz that Canada has reaffirmed its support for a strong western military policy.

At a press conference ending their fourth quarterly session on international and Canada-US relations, both Mr. MacEachen and Mr. Shultz expressed mutual determination to maintain a strong military posture toward the Soviet Union unless there is progress in international disarmament talks in Geneva.

"We have demonstrated our solidarity with the (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) allies and our association with the United States in our decision to test the cruise missile," Mr. MacEachen said.

"Those decisions are still a very important part of Canadian foreign policy and that constituted a very important common cornerstone of our discussion."

Mr. Shultz expressed appreciation for the Canadian government's promise to staunchly support NATO's commitment to deploy more missiles in Western Europe while "maintaining our posture of being ready for strong discussions and reasonable positions of give-and-take in the various fora where we are meeting with the Soviets".

## Canada-United States sign phosphate agreement



Canadian Minister of External Affairs Allan MacEachen and the US Secretary of State George Schultz recently signed an amendment to a 1978 agreement to lower the phosphate level in the Great Lakes. The new agreement calls for a reduction in the amount of phosphorus draining into the Great Lakes from non-sewage sources. It was signed during a meeting of the two foreign ministers held in Halifax, October 16-17. Pictured above following the signing are: George Schultz (seated left), Allan MacEachen (seated right), administrator of the US Environmental Protection Agency William Ruckelshaus (standing left) and Canadian ambassador to Washington Allan Gotlieb (standing right).

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