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CANADA AND THE WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION

The World Meteorological Organization is one of 13 intergovernmental organizations linked with the United Nations through special agreements arranged by the Economic and Social Council and approved by the General Assembly and by the organization concerned. The Specialized Agencies of the United Nations are expert in their respective fields: labour, health, education, food and agriculture, finance and banking, civil aviation, postal matters, telecommunications, meteorology, international development and maritime matters.

History

The earth's weather and climate do not respect political frontiers and they create many similar problems all over the world. Realizing that large-scale international co-operation was necessary to solve these problems, the nations of the world have made a common effort to apply available knowledge of the weather and its evolution to the main activities of man. Canada, occupying as it does a considerable portion of the northern hemisphere, including a large part of the meteorologically vital Arctic, became one of the earliest participants in this international exchange of weather data.

From 1853 efforts were made to draw up a programme of meteorological observations over the oceans, based on the collaboration of shipping belonging to most of the maritime countries. This was still fourteen years before Canada attained her national status.

In 1878, the International Meteorological Organization, composed of the Directors of National Meteorological Services, was created during an international conference at Utrecht in the Netherlands. The infant Meteorological Service of Canada, established in 1839, was not represented at this meeting.

In 1882 the head of the Canadian Meteorological Service, C. Carpmael, sent a full report on the state of the Canadian service to the second meeting of the International Committee held at Copenhagen that year. By 1855 European meteorologists, recognizing the importance of data from Canada and the United States, were studying ways and means of getting weather reports from North America by cable.

During the present century the tremendous development of means of transport and communications (sea and air navigation, radio-telegraphy) and the increased requirements of modern economic activity have given rise to a large number of technical problems and have emphasized the importance of meteorology. At the same time, the surprising development of technology has enabled this relatively young science to make considerable progress. These new developments showed that reorganization at an international level was necessary in view of the increased interest in meteorology.