

IX. Information

THE provision of information about Canada to the peoples of other countries is an integral part of the conduct of our external relations. It is equally important that Canadians be well-informed about their country's policy in international affairs.

The function of the Information Division is thus a dual one: to assist diplomatic, consular, and trade officials abroad in meeting the information requirements of the press and public; and to make available, within Canada, current information and reference material on external policy and the work of the Department. The principal activities designed to achieve these ends are summarized in the sections that follow.

Press Liaison

The Department's press liaison activities in Ottawa fall under three main headings: press releases, press conferences and the handling of enquiries from members of the press. Press releases, texts of important speeches by the Minister and senior officials, and occasional reference materials are distributed to the Parliamentary Press Gallery, news agencies, editors, diplomatic missions in Ottawa and Canadian missions abroad.

A weekly press conference is held by the Minister, when he is in Ottawa. To this are invited all foreign and Canadian correspondents who are members of the Press Gallery. Instituted primarily to provide background information to enable correspondents to write well-informed stories, the conference also gives the press an opportunity to ask questions on any matters concerning Canada's foreign policy or the Department of External Affairs.

In other countries Canadian representatives assist newspapers and news services in obtaining information about Canada and events in Canada. This work is of particular importance in the world news centres of New York, Washington, London and Paris. In addition to providing material on request to writers and newspapermen, offices abroad issue their own press releases on Canadian subjects of special interest in that country. The Department and posts abroad also encourage foreign journalists to visit Canada and offer them assistance in planning itineraries, obtaining background information and arranging interviews.

During the United Nations General Assembly sessions, a special attempt is made to help Canadian newspapers to give full coverage of