

## *Cross-Canada Tours for Junior Diplomats*

**M**EMBERS of Canadian diplomatic missions throughout the world are often required to provide specific information about their country, a land extending 4,000 miles from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean and about 2,000 miles from the United States border to the top of the world, in which regional characteristics and problems vary greatly. The Department of External Affairs must, therefore, ensure that its officers are able to convey an accurate and balanced picture of Canada. The problem is solved partly by supplying posts with Canadian newspapers, magazines, books and films, and with publications issued by the Department itself. There is, in addition, a special training programme, introduced last year, that enables junior officers to travel the country from coast to coast before they are posted.

These cross-Canada tours are intended to provide groups of about 20 officers with the means of acquiring a greater understanding of the evolution and interrelations of the economic, social and cultural aspects of the various regions of Canada and to improve the knowledge they possess of the geographical and physical realities of their country. To that end, the programme includes meetings in Ottawa with federal officials, followed by visits to the provincial capitals and other major centres of interest for interviews with provincial and civic authorities and senior officials. There are also, in each region, "in-residence" seminars and group discussions with sociologists, economists, industrialists, editors, writers, artists, educators, leaders of socio-economic organizations, etc. Informal gatherings are arranged to permit the touring groups to meet people of various occupations in the communities they visit.

The programme as a whole is planned and co-ordinated with the co-operation of the two Canadian national organizations for adult education, the Canadian Association for Adult Education and l'Institut Canadien d'Éducation des Adultes, both of which have long experience in the development of such programmes and have established close relations with regional societies and groups. Each programme is a balance between visits (to places and organizations) and opportunities to explore, through discussions and seminars, the elements of the Canadian entity.

The 18 officers who participated in the latest programme, in October and November 1967, met and discussed various aspects of contemporary Canadian life with over 400 leading Canadians, who represented most areas of interest from coast to coast. Although the pace was wearing, all the officers agreed that their perception of Canada was much clearer and their ability to represent their country in other lands greatly augmented.