

but giving a balanced picture of what is broadly characteristic. In other words, we have our share of difficulties as well as our achievements."

Against this background, let me speak in more specific terms about information policy as seen from the Department of External Affairs.

First, a word about the limitations under which government information must operate. An obvious limitation is the fact that the information we dispense seldom, if ever, makes news. A single well-timed statement such as Prime Minister Diefenbaker's last year, at Dartmouth, can do more to focus attention in the United States on the problems of Canadian - United States relations than all our representatives could achieve in a year of work. It is reasonable to think, however, that the result would not have been nearly as effective had it not been for the time spent by our Embassy and consulates in recent years, in preparing public opinion for just such a contingency.

A second limitation derives from the fact that the role of government information is, by and large, supplementary to existing channels through which people in other countries obtain their impressions of Canada. A last but important limitation arises from the territorial scope of our operations, with consequent staff and budgetary implications.

These factors, and others, affect our activities in two distinct ways: first, our planning and execution are tied to a system of priorities: of geographical areas, of themes and of media. Secondly, our information service is chiefly responsive, which for us is not a synonym for inactive. Its main job is to use every opportunity that arises to make Canada better known and liked, to create a context of understanding and sympathy in which, when the need arises, Canadian policy may be properly interpreted, new developments correctly assessed, and Canadian interests usefully promoted.

The bulk of the impressions that people in many foreign countries receive about Canada come to them through international news, picture, radio and television organizations, through business connections, through labour, educational and cultural associations, through the exchange of visitors and students, through international professional contacts, through private correspondence and in many other ways. While the Government plays only a limited part in this constant flow of impressions, they pose for its information services numerous tasks of interpretation or elaboration required for an accurate and balanced portrayal of Canada. It is to this supplementary task that we address ourselves in countries where press communications and all manner of exchanges with this country are well developed. In other countries, we have the additional task of providing the basic news and information which is lacking, and of promoting closer contacts with Canada