

find sites to dump their highly radioactive nuclear wastes, pose grave hazards in these regions. People in the developing world can at least be spared the "export" of such hazards and pollutants originating in the developed nations.

Increasing "natural" disasters

Apart from serious disturbance to our fragile ecosystem, contributed both by the developed and developing nations, it is alarming to note the pace of the environmental destruction itself. Various factors are at work to exacerbate this grim situation. Many parts of the world, hitherto fertile and green, are rapidly turning into deserts. With the disturbance of the monsoon cycles, many vulnerable areas are successively hit by severe droughts, while at the same time, sudden cloudbursts cause floods in other parts, bringing havoc in their wakes. Such natural disasters are now assuming greater "killer potential" and uprooting a large number of people from their natural habitats, especially in the Third World. A report entitled *Prevention Better than Cure* (1984) by the Swedish Red Cross, shows a quantum jump in disaster events each year from the Sixties (39.3) to the Seventies (54.7). In India alone, 60,000 people were killed between 1960 and 1981 in disasters. It has been especially noticed that nations with severe deforestation, erosion, overcultivation and overgrazing are the most prone to natural disasters.

The catalogue of environmental damage is dismal but real. Sustainable development is the only effective remedy for halting the swelling hordes of environmental refugees. For this, however, conservation of the environment is a *sine qua non*, without which any development is a misnomer. It urgently calls for greater international cooperation and coordination, both at regional and global levels, to meet this unprecedented environmental challenge. New environmental sensitivity must guide policy-making as well as the allocation of funds for our developmental goals. The developing nations have to take concrete steps to check the still-unabated depletion of forests and other natural resources. At the same time, developed nations have a vital role to play. They must take measures to ensure that their activities (e.g., huge industrial clusters, giant oil carriers, radioactive waste dumping, nuclear tests) and this affluence do not worsen the already critical global environment. In fact, they should come forward to join hands, in the combined drive to preserve our endangered "common ecological heritage" on this small planet. As the great nations are immersed in their mindless nuclear arms race, proxy wars and power rivalries, and as millions are facing starvation, we must realize that the environmental holocaust is on the way. Our own survival is now at stake. Only wiser counsels can divert us from this self-propelled suicide. □

Book reviews

Down on the farm

by David Kirk

Canadian Agriculture in a Global Context: Opportunities and Obligations edited by Irene Sage Knell and John R. English. Waterloo, Ontario: University of Waterloo Press, 1986, 229 pages, \$17.50.

This volume of papers is the first of two which have been generated by a May 1985 conference of the same name sponsored by the Centre for Foreign Policy and Federalism at the University of Waterloo and Sir Wilfrid Laurier University. Of the fifteen authors of the twelve papers plus preface, eleven are based at six universities across Canada, three are specialists in Agriculture Canada, CIDA, and the United Nations secretariat, and one is now a consultant with wide experience in international and NGO development work.

All are informed and thoughtful and what they have to say is worth reading. The promised second volume from the conference, if of the same standard and not too repetitious, should compound the value of this work. It touches many bases in an extremely complex and soberingly important area.

These articles examine agricultural policy and export market potential in three major markets for Canadian grain and oilseeds: China, USSR and Eastern Europe, and Japan. There are two global overviews — one from an international and one from a Canadian perspective. Two highlight conservation issues, one is Canada's resource base, the other is international, with passionate emphasis on the ecological threat posed by the progressive disappearance of the world's tree cover. Another traces the long postwar experience of US barter and barter-like trade in farm products and their impact on Canada's trade and trade policies. One broadly reviews agricultural and

food issues internationally in food security, trade and Third World development, including the international institutional framework. Another article examines Canada's export potential and competitiveness. One discusses Canadian farm policy with special attention to federal and provincial policies and relationships. Another reviews agricultural relations among developed countries (which involves the emergence of the EEC as an agricultural exporter) and Canada's interest and role in them.

What are we shown in this book? Little that is new but much that is unresolved: currently, far less food than is required to meet the nutritional needs of massed millions of the world, yet more food for sale than there are commercial markets for, with prices depressed; magnificent technological achievements and potential, yet frightening threats to the ecology of the agricultural resource base. Heavy-laden words spring to mind: poverty and