

ENVIRONMENT

Environment issues have long been an active area of Canada/United States relations. While both countries have traditionally shared similar environmental goals, problems inevitably develop between countries with a long common border. Close cooperation is therefore important.

Environmental problems are likely to remain in the forefront of Canada/U.S. relations. For example, there is growing concern in both countries about the transport of air pollutants over long distances especially those causing acid rain; the Great Lakes require a continued clean up effort including measures to deal with the problem of toxic waste disposal; and there is a need to resolve longstanding problems such as the Garrison Diversion issue.

The future direction of domestic environmental and resource management policy and programmes will be important in addressing such problems.

The support given by both countries to environmental protection measures is essential in ensuring that environmental problems are managed on a cooperative basis and that international legal commitments are respected. Canada and the U.S. have developed a considerable body of such commitment over the years. The 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty serves as the cornerstone of environmental relations; it establishes a framework for managing water related problems. It also commits both countries not to injure each other through pollution. The Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement is a large scale undertaking by both Governments to devote the necessary effort and resources to cleaning up the Lakes. There are also a number of agreements and arrangements which have been developed to deal with possible marine pollution.

An important new undertaking was the Memorandum of Intent on Transboundary Air Pollution signed by both Governments in August 1980. This recognizes the serious problem of trans-boundary air pollution, especially acid rain, and commits Canada and the United States to negotiate a cooperative agreement. It also commits them to interim actions pending conclusion of an agreement including rigorous application of existing air pollution laws and regulations, advance notification and consultation, and cooperation in research.