

To facilitate cooperation in this field, I am pleased to announce the establishment of a Canadian Polar Commission. The Commission, comprised of distinguished Canadians, covering a broad range of polar research, will be a contact point for Canadian and foreign scientists and will promote international cooperation in Arctic science.

The Arctic is neither a museum nor a laboratory. It is a region where people make their livings and where competing cultural and economic interests conflict and must be reconciled.

The Arctic is no longer a pristine reserve, safely apart from the unintended consequences of economic development in the South. The Arctic is suffering from environmental problems both from its own economic development and from industrial activity elsewhere. There are disturbingly high levels of toxic chemicals in the Arctic food chain -- even in mothers' milk -- which originated further South, for the most part. There is worrying evidence, developed by Soviet and Canadian scientists and others that the ozone layer is depleted. In the European Arctic, acid precipitation is falling in areas far removed from economic activity. And, over 70 percent of the pollutants that make up the "Arctic haze" off Canada's Northern Coast are originating on this side of the Arctic. Since the mid 1950's, that haze has grown by 75 percent.

It is no secret that Canadians need to do more to protect their own natural environment. It is likewise no secret that the Soviet Union faces major challenges regarding air quality and river basin pollution, including rivers emptying into the Arctic and the disposal of hazardous chemicals.

There are benefits to both sides in exchanging information and technology relevant to such topics as acid rain and toxic chemicals. You have in Norilsk, and we have in Sudbury, examples of very large mineral-processing complexes with major environmental effects; our best people should be put in contact with each other.

In both the Soviet Union and Canada, the public opposes economic development of a kind that harms the environment. In both countries, funds and technology are needed to correct past mistakes and prevent new ones.

We, in Canada, do not believe that sustainable development can be realized unless business enterprise is engaged in the effort to develop non-polluting technologies and processes. And, in fact, business in Canada is increasingly taking the lead in this area.