

Chapter 8

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS

The view which people in other countries hold about Canada affects, in greater or lesser degree, the conduct of Canada's international relations. Thus an essential task of the Department is to increase public knowledge about Canada abroad, especially among "opinion-makers" in other countries. International cultural and academic relations programs are directed towards that end.

Public affairs programs seek to promote an image of Canada as a democratic federal state with a cultural life stemming from its bilingual and multicultural heritage, and as a reliable trading partner receptive to foreign investment and capable of developing sophisticated technology.

Cultural policy

In September 1983, a Cultural Policy Division was established to enable the Department systematically to develop Canadian cultural policies towards an ever-increasing number of countries. From a modest beginning 15 years ago, the international cultural program now constitutes an increasingly important element in Canada's foreign policy. The reorganization of the Department and the changing international and domestic environment necessitated a new look at cultural objectives.

A first task was to initiate a review of Canada's international cultural relations policy and programs, including the role of Canada's cultural industries and how they can best be supported in the foreign marketplace. The review was conducted jointly with the Department of Communications, in consultation with provincial governments and other federal departments and agencies. Contacts with the provinces in the field of international cultural relations continued to grow and one objective of the review was to improve the existing co-ordinating mechanisms.

In the autumn of 1983, bilateral cultural consultations were held with the United Kingdom, Belgium, the People's Republic of China and Japan. Cultural consultations with Mexico took place in Mexico City in March 1984.

The infusion of new funds approved at the end of the year under review will make possible some expansion of cultural programs in certain priority countries, such as the USA and Japan. Cultural events are playing an increasingly important part in Canada's relations with countries in Latin America and Asia, and some of the increased resources will be devoted to these areas.

UNESCO

The twenty-second session of the General Conference of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was held in Paris in October and November 1983. The Organization's program was adopted by consensus, but its budget was passed by a split vote. Canada was elected to the Executive Board by the General Conference. The Cana-

dian delegation urged UNESCO to avoid contentious political elements in its discussions and to set priorities more strictly within the framework established by its constitution. This plea had particular relevance at a time when UNESCO was facing the most serious crisis in its history, following the announcement by the United States of its intention to withdraw. Canada considered that the principle of the universality of the United Nations was critical; it therefore hoped that all member states would remain within the Organization and work together to reform it.

Arts promotion

During 1983-84 the Department continued its efforts to promote Canadian artists and to disseminate their works abroad, particularly in the fields of the performing arts, visual arts and literature. The main method was to award grants to artists and professional groups, enabling them to go on tours and present exhibitions, mainly in Western Europe and the United States. Of special note was the Department's involvement in the successful European tours of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and the Anna Wyman Dance Company of Vancouver, of the Stratford Festival at the Old Vic Theatre in London, Les Grands Ballets Canadiens in New York, the Orford Quartet in Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Japan, the Theatre Ballet of Canada in Latin America, and the Montreal Ballets Jazz in Africa.

The Department supported or presented some 75 exhibitions of noted Canadian artists in galleries and museums throughout the world, including the 49th Parallel Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art in New York and its cultural centres in Brussels, London, Paris and Rome. The Colville Retrospective, presented in Berlin and Cologne, and Canadian landscapes (Collection Firestone) presented in London, Madrid and Paris, were also well received. The Department also supported films and literature through film showings, book donations, tours of writers, and the like. Canada's posts continued to help Canadian artists to work abroad and the Department also supported some 60 visits to Canada by foreign artists, invited by cultural bodies from all regions of Canada.

Canadian studies abroad

Encouragement of Canadian studies in foreign universities continued to be an important element of the Department's academic relations program. The International Council for Canadian Studies held its first biennial conference in Vancouver in June 1983, at which the first International Canadian Studies Northern Telecom Award was presented. The 1984 award was made in Germany in February at the annual meeting of the Association of Canadian studies for German-speaking peoples. Other associations of Canadian Studies outside Canada are those in the United States, France,