

ELEMENTS OF CANADA - FRG CULTURAL AND ACADEMIC RELATIONS

Cultural Relations

Over the years, Canada has invested considerable money, time and energy in cultural programs which have greatly added to Canadian prestige in the FRG. They are designed and implemented to support our foreign policy and economic objectives. Performances by the Montreal Symphony Orchestra in 1987 in six German cities were a great public and critical success. In 1989 the National Ballet of Canada will perform in the capital, Bonn, as part of the 2,000th anniversary celebrations of the city. Smaller events which demonstrate to German audiences the accomplishments of Canadian artists are also organized and supported. Canadian authors such as Margaret Atwood, Robertson Davies and Arita Van Herk enjoy considerable success in the FRG; and translations of their works have opened doors for other Canadian writers. While sales of Canadian authors' books are modest in the intensively competitive German market, students of English-language literature are becoming much more aware of Canadian literature. There is great interest in the FRG in the culture and way of life of Canada's indigenous people and their environment.

Between April 24 and June 12, 1988, Schwaebisch Gmuend, a relatively small but very prosperous town, plays host to "Encounter with Canada," a festival of cultural and public affairs events, including a two-day seminar on economic opportunities in Canada.

Canada's Academic Relations with the FRG

Only a few years ago, the study of Canada in the universities of the Federal Republic of Germany was virtually unknown. While immense strides had been made in furthering American studies -- more specifically the study of the United States of America -- in virtually all major institutions of higher learning, Canadian studies could not even lay claim to poor-sister status. With a few notable exceptions, nothing was taught about Canada at all.

In an attempt to remedy this situation, members of the Canadian Embassy in Bonn some 12 years ago began meeting regularly with 40 or so representatives of the German academic community who had expressed an interest in teaching and carrying out research about Canada. From these modest beginnings an extensive network of "Canadianists" has grown up over the years.