

Canada has an important contribution to make in a rapidly evolving world. For that contribution to be truly valuable and to ensure that all Canadians benefit from the international activities, that we as a country engage in provincial interests must be taken into consideration. And here, ladies and gentlemen, is one of the biggest challenges we face.

There is a basis in history and geography for such provincial interests. They were centered until the early 1960's largely on trade, tourism and immigration. Over the last fifteen years, there has been an explosion of interest on the part of provincial governments, in expanded and wide-ranging links with foreign jurisdictions first in the socio-cultural, more recently in the economic fields. This is a reflection of the increasing interdependence I have noted, and the fact that the substance of international relations often touches on areas of vital direct interest to the provinces.

I have learned a great deal in my new portfolio but there is one thing I have become especially convinced of in my first six months as SSEA: Canada has the most flexible and open attitude to the international interests and activities of provincial governments of any existing federation.

In the Department of External Affairs, we were quick to respond to the new interest manifested by the provinces in international affairs: by 1966 the need for a special unit within the Department was evident and a full-fledged federal-provincial coordination division was established soon after to handle the developing relationship with provincial governments. Since then that division has been very busy. You might be interested to know that over the last six years, for instance, it has, among other activities, assisted over 400 provincial visits abroad (including several by Mr. Moores).

It soon became obvious that there was ample scope for provincial participation in the ever increasing number of important activities on the international scene in a very wide range of areas. To cite a few.

- (i) the vital relations between Canada and the United States (Garrison, Great Lakes Water Quality, fishing zones, investment, trade promotion). The relationships are so numerous and extensive that this area even has been a target for much academic analysis of the effect of the federal-provincial dimension on Canada-U.S. relations;