Multilateral environmental policy

Pollution knows no frontiers. In addition to its continuing bilateral co-operation with adjacent countries— notably the United States and Denmark—, Canada's concern with the balance of nature has been reflected in its efforts to promote an increased level of environmental awareness and higher international environmental standards through participation in multilateral assemblies such as the United Nations, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the European Community.

Participation in the OECD Environment Committee and the NATO Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society has enabled Canada to benefit by exchanges of information and experience and by co-operation in environmental studies and projects of interest to Canada as will as other technologically-advanced Western societies. Similar benefits have been derived from a program of information exchanges with the European Community.

The states participating in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe recognized that protection and improvement of the environment was one of the tasks of central importance to the well-being of people everywhere. There was substantial progress in 1977 towards realizing the provisions of the Helsinki Final Act affecting the environment within the framework of the UN Economic Commission for Europe.

By its participation in the Environment Program of the United Nations, including continuing support for the voluntary Environment Fund, Canada demonstrated the importance it attached to a global approach to protecting the natural balance for future generations. The United Nations program has enabled Canada to share its knowledge and experience in this sphere with the developing countries. Canada has fully supported the aim ofthe UN Environmental Program to encourage sound and appropriate growth so that developing countries might avoid the major environmental problems associated with rapid industrial and technological progress. This concern also underlay Canada's significant contributions to the United Nations conferences held in 1977 on water and "desertification".

Science policy

The international scientific activities of the Federal Government are aimed at helping to ensure that Canada attains a position among the leaders of the industrialized and technologically-advanced countries. This object is pursued by various means, including exchanges of information, visits of technical experts, and joint research projects in collaboration with other nations. These activities are promoted by the Department of External Affairs in close collaboration with science-based departments and agencies.

Canada was active in 1977 in a variety of science-policy organizations. The Agence de Coopération Culturelle et Technique, Canada's representative to which was the Minister of Communications, met to decide on the major aims of an expanded science and technology program. Canadian representatives attended meetings of the Commonwealth Science Council, the OECD Committee on Science and Technology Policy, the NATO Science Committee and the Senior Advisers on Science and Technology of the Economic Commission for Europe. Canada was also represented at a UNESCO meeting preparatory to a conference of science policy ministers (MINESPOL II) scheduled for 1978. In May, Canada and the Federal Republic of Germany held their fourth consultative meeting within the framework of the agreement on scientific and technological co-operation. An exploratory technical mission visited Poland to identify areas of possible co-operation.

Air relations

Canada's airlines continued to retrench and consolidate their services during the course of the year. The efficient implementation of existing agreements was emphasized rather than the negotiation of new and expanded services. Canadian air connections with the U.S.S.R., Czechoslovakia, Austria and Belgium were suspended. CP Air and Air Canada withdrew from the IATA North Atlantic fares agreement and negotiated their fares bilaterally.