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## Habitat conference glimpses a Canadian waste-management system

Among the many demonstrations, films and exhibits shown at Habitat: the United Conference on Human Settlements that was held in Vancouver from May 31 to June 11, was a film demonstrating a Canadian-invented system for managing waste. CANWEL\*, developed by Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, is described below.

Conference delegates – over 2,000 strong – and participants in Habitat Forum – about 5,000 persons representing non-governmental agencies – were invited to visit the Ontario Research Foundation Laboratories at Sheridan Park, Mississauga, near Toronto where the project is being refined and improved. A demonstration unit will be installed next year in an apartment building in Toronto.

Populations grow constantly, but the lakes and rivers on which they depend for their water remain the same. Many of even the largest lakes are today experiencing the strain of excessive domestic sewage. They are aging much faster than in the past, becoming old long before their time. The degradation of the (fresh water) Great Lakes and the larger (salt water) Mediterranean Sea are prime examples.

The only way to combat this process is to reduce the waste load by treating both industrial and domestic wastes efficiently *before* they enter the natural system. The idea is not new. The Egyptians began experimenting with the chemical treatment of waste water over 3,000 years ago.

### CMHC search for solution

As part of its unending search for long-term solutions, Canada, through its federal housing agency, Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, has spent over 15 years in developments leading to a system of total waste-management.

The Corporation's multi-pronged attack on the problems of sewage treatment, fresh-water use, energy conservation and environmental protection is aimed at the development of an economical waste-management technology that will produce an effluent as good as unpolluted, high-quality streams, avoid the disadvantages of chlorine, offer an alternative to existing cen-

tralized systems, and conserve as much energy as possible.

### CANWEL is the answer

The result of these initiatives is the Canadian Water Energy Loop (CANWEL) in which the effluent from sewage treatment has a very high degree of purity, solid waste can be converted efficiently to heat energy, and both processes are free of environmental pollution hazards.

CANWEL promises to be simple, very reliable, and highly efficient, satisfying the most demanding requirements for protection of the environment and conservation of resources. It promises as well to be economical to install and cheaper to operate than conventional processes.

CANWEL employs well-known and widely-applied principles, and derives its success from an innovative application of these principles, supported by the most efficient engineering. CANWEL has achieved complete and comprehensive compatibility among the functions of the various elements of the system.

Planners from CMHC and the Ontario Research Foundation developed a list of criteria for the system. To be considered successful, CANWEL must:

- (1) achieve a significantly higher level of performance than conventional systems;
- (2) maintain a high level of reliability and sustained efficiency over long periods of virtually unattended operation;
- (3) require capital investment not ex-

\* The CANWEL process is the subject of patent applications in Canada and abroad. The name is a registered trademark and the property of CMHC, Canada.

At Habitat Forum on June 6, a resolution was approved demanding clean water throughout the world by 1990. Justice Minister Ron Basford, leader of the Canadian delegation, pledged clean water for every Canadian community by 1980.