

Environment

Both Canada and the United States continued to pay close attention to transboundary environmental issues. Bilateral co-operation in the search for mutually satisfactory solutions to problems of environmental protection along a common border dates from the 1909 Boundary Waters Treaty and the establishment of the International Joint Commission (IJC). A valuable role continued to be played by the IJC which, in addition to its regulatory and advisory functions, carried out special studies at the request of the two Governments on certain areas of transboundary concern.

Transboundary air quality, including the long-range transport of air-borne pollutants and the acid precipitation problem, was a major focus of environmental concern for both Canada and the United States. In July 1979 the two Governments announced their intention to develop a co-operative agreement on air quality. Of considerable assistance to governments in addressing their air pollution problems was the first Annual Report, in October 1979, of the Canada/United States Research Consultation Group, a technical body established in 1978 to co-ordinate air pollution research in both countries.

On December 19, the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the U.S. Ambassador signed an agreement establishing a management regime for vessel traffic, including west coast tankers, in the Strait of Juan de Fuca region. Among other environmental issues discussed between Canada and the U.S. were the protection of migratory caribou in the western Arctic, and the Garrison Diversion project in North Dakota. In addition, Canada continued to follow closely developments in the U.S. on the proposed refinery at Eastport, Maine. The problem of hazardous and toxic wastes, particularly in the Great Lakes region, is of increasing concern to both Governments.

Defence

Canada and the United States continued to co-operate during the year on a broad range of bilateral defence questions. The Canada-U.S. Permanent Joint Board on Defence held discussions on the future of North American air defence systems, defence production, and other bilateral issues. A Canada-U.S. study, initiated in 1978 and completed in October 1979, presented a series of policy alternatives to the two governments for continental air defence over the next 20 years (see also Part A, Chapter 1).