

EUROPEAN POSTINGS — THE LURE OF THE FOREIGN SERVICE

PARIS, LONDON, ROME, GENEVA, BRUSSELS, STOCKHOLM — thoughts of living in places like these, are what enticed many of us into the foreign service.

History. Culture. Opportunities for travel. Good schooling, fine cuisine, great skiing — TRUE...but why, do we have 37 missions (meaning over 700 employees and their families) representing our interests in this part of the world? What are the key issues facing Canada and Europe?

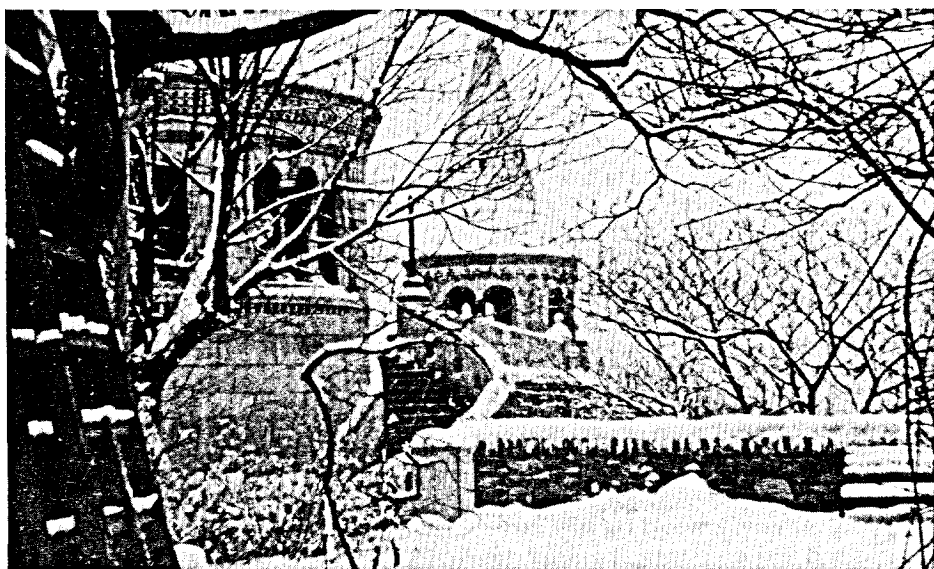
EUROPE in 1 000 words or less, is worse than EUROPE in ten days, but better (supposedly) than no EUROPE at all. So, in the hopes that this will increase your knowledge a little of Canada-European affairs, we offer the following few words (the facts and excerpts of which, have been taken from the yet unpublished 1983-84 External Affairs Annual Report).

EASTERN EUROPE

East-West relations have always had some tensions, but in 1983-84 they were put to a severe test. The Soviet withdrawal from two key talks — the Intermediate Range Nuclear Force Talks (INF) and the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) caused further aggravation to the existing general turndown in trust and confidence; plus, the destruction of the Korean airliner, killing all 269 passengers on board including ten Canadians, resulted in international outrage.

In face of the increasing alienation of East and West, Prime Minister Trudeau undertook a wide-ranging peace initiative in the autumn of 1983, which was well received in the capitals throughout Europe.

The situation in Poland remained a preoccupation. Following the lifting of martial law in July 1983, the Polish Government introduced measures which, in reality, provided it with powers equivalent to those available under martial law. In light of this, Canada took advantage of its consultations with various East European countries to raise issues of human rights and of families separated by political borders. Official representations were made to the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, Poland, the German Democratic Republic, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria on behalf of approximately 272 persons seeking to join close relatives in Canada. Under the relaxed immigration criteria of the Polish Family Movement Measures, some 1 500 persons left Poland to be united with relatives in Canada. An additional 207 Polish political detainees and their dependants were resettled in Canada under a special legislative mechanism for political prisoners and oppressed persons.



The Fishermen's Bastion in Budapest, Hungary.

In our relations with Russia, several years of negotiations culminated in April 1984, with a new fisheries treaty between the two countries. This treaty strengthened provisions concerning conservation of stocks beyond Canada's 200 mile economic zone and, for the first time, included a Soviet commitment to purchase Canadian fish products. Negotiations on a program of exchanges in the context of Arctic co-operation continue.

With regard to trade, most Eastern European countries imposed vigorous import restraint programs to reduce indebtedness to the West. Consequently Canadian exports declined by 18% while imports increased marginally. We also participated in trade fairs in six different Eastern European countries, engaged in bilateral trade consultations with Romania and Czechoslovakia and sent a delegation to the Soviet Union for the first meeting of the Canada-USSR Mixed Commission since 1978. The Program for Export Market Development (PEMD) also was extensively used by Canadian firms pursuing export opportunities, and Countertrade, which is paying for imported goods and services by bartering goods of local production, continued to play an important role in East-West trade.

WESTERN EUROPE

Relations with Western European countries encompassed a wide spectrum of Canadian interests and remained good during 1983-84. Prime Ministerial and Ministerial visits in both directions played an important role in intensifying bilateral ties.

A major event in 1983-84 was the settlement of outstanding problems associated with the 1981 Canada-EC Long Term Agreement

on Fisheries. This Agreement provided important new benefits to Canada, notably improved access for Canadian fish to the European market. In return, the European Community gained access to Canadian waters to fish for specific allocations of cod and squid. The removal of these outstanding problems should ensure a harmonious implementation of this treaty until its expiry in 1987.

Tensions in Canada's relations with the European Community continued, however, in the area of seals. On February 28, 1983, the EC Council of Environment Ministers adopted a resolution, which came into effect October 1, 1983, banning the importation of seal pup skins into the Community for two years. Strong representations continue to be made to remove this measure.

In terms of trade, economic conditions and the relative strength of the Canadian dollar were major factors contributing to a decline in exports to Western Europe of 9.4% whereas imports, on the other hand, were up marginally by 7.1% leaving us with a positive trade balance.

Western Europe is a key area for world scale trade fairs. In 1983 the Department organized exhibitions in 43 trade fairs, plus there was an active program of some 44 trade missions in which European buyers were brought to Canada or in which delegations of exporters established contacts in Europe. In November 1983, a Consulate General was opened in Munich formalizing our presence in southern Germany.

Life in Western Europe may be the "lure of the foreign service", yet Eastern Europe has a lure of its own — a unique lure — for those seeking an enriching, ultimately rewarding, experience abroad.