

Co-operation agency meets in Togo

A Canadian delegation attended the general conference of the Cultural and Technical Co-operation Agency in Lomé, Togo, December 12-14.

The delegation, led by Senator Martial Asselin, Minister of State for the Canadian International Development Agency, included Federal Government advisers as well as representatives of Quebec and New Brunswick as participating governments in the Agency, and representatives from Ontario and Manitoba. Before going to Lomé, Senator Asselin visited the Ivory Coast, Niger, Mali, Senegal and Ghana.

Crown corporations — a bill for tighter control

Legislation, designed to bring 178 wholly-owned Crown corporations under greater parliamentary control, was tabled in the House of Commons by Perrin Beatty, Minister of State for the Treasury Board on November 26.

The omnibus bill is aimed at providing Parliament with better means to control and direct the management of Crown corporations, while requiring increased accountability from them for their performance. The bill is also designed to stop the proliferation of Crown corporations and their subsidiaries by requiring both statutory authority and Governor-in-Council approval of any future acquisitions or incorporations.

Other provisions

Other measures include:

- A provision whereby Crown corporations could be issued legally-binding directives by Government to pursue objectives "in the national interest". For example to locate new facilities in areas with high unemployment or to buy Canadian goods and equipment. Those Crown corporations that sustain verifiable losses or additional costs owing to such "national interest" directives would receive compensation from the Government, with the approval of Parliament.
- A series of provisions designed to strengthen boards of directors of Crown corporations in carrying out their responsibilities. For example, the bill will place the boards of directors and officers under provisions nearly identical to those

of the Canada Business Corporations Act as it applies to their duties, responsibilities and liabilities. This Act provides the legal framework for federally-incorporated companies in the private sector.

- A series of provisions designed to exercise more control over the financial expenditures and commitments of Crown corporations by requiring their capital budgets to be submitted to Government for approval and continuing scrutiny. With this will go more responsibility and flexibility for the boards of directors to develop corporate plans, capital budgets and manage their own debt financing.
 - Clarification of the meaning and implications of "agent of Her Majesty" status for Crown corporations — especially as it applies to financing. The result would be that Crown corporations wishing to borrow, on the long-term, from private sources would have to do so on their own credit rather than on that of the Crown. In addition, their past and present liabilities will, for the first time, be accurately reflected in the Public Accounts since they have been and will, continue to be liabilities of the Crown until they have fully repaid principal and interest.
 - A series of provisions designed to improve the financial management and control of Crown corporations in response to the Auditor General's observations and recommendations in his 1976 and 1977 reports to Parliament.
- Six "cultural" agencies with corporate status listed in the bill are not subject to its provisions at this time pending the outcome of the announced parliamentary review of cultural policy by the Secretary of State Department, said Mr. Beatty. However, the Government intends to ensure that they are covered by appropriate provisions in the bill after the review is completed.

Anti-hijacking pact renewed

The Canadian and Cuban governments have renewed an anti-hijacking agreement for another five years.

The agreement on hijacking of aircraft, vessels and other offences was initially signed in February 1973.

The renewal, concluded through an exchange of notes in Havana between the Canadian Ambassador to Cuba, G.R. Harman, and the Acting Cuban Minister for Foreign Affairs, René Anillo Capote, came into force on October 3.

Freighters for Poland

The last in a series of four multi-purpose cargo ships built by Marine Industries Ltd. of Sorel, Quebec, for Polish Ocean Lines Ltd., is undergoing completion following launching.

The ice-strengthened 16,000-ton dead-weight vessel, named for Polish statesman and scientist Boleslaw Ruminski, is designed to carry ore, grain, timber and containers in addition to general cargo. The design includes a refrigeration unit.

The contract for the four vessels was awarded to Marine Industries following international competition. The federal Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce provided a subsidy of 20 per cent; there was also loan assistance from the Export Development Corporation.

The ship is intended for service between Poland and the Far East.

The christening ceremony at Sorel was performed by Barbara Koczorowicz, a leading chemical engineer in Poland.

Canada-France trade acts repealed

A bill to repeal the Canada-France Trade Agreement Act (1933-1935) was tabled recently in the Senate.

This bill is the result of the decision announced by the previous government to terminate this agreement. Following this decision, the Canada-France Trade Agreement was not recognized under international law but remains valid under Canadian law until the legislation is passed.

Following the establishment of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) in 1948 and the membership of France in the European Economic Community (EEC), the only part of the agreement that continued to have any practical effect was Article 11, providing for the mutual protection of appellations of origin for goods produced in either country.

In recent years this Article has been a contentious issue in Canada-France relations as a result of a series of court actions undertaken in the late 1960s by French industry concerning the use of the champagne appellation by Canadian producers. In future, the protection of appellation of origin will be covered by the Trade Marks Act which will be placed before Parliament for revision.