

La Francophonie

The French-speaking Community, a cultural grouping of some 30 countries throughout the world, established the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation in 1970 as a means of actively developing co-operation among member countries in the fields of education, culture, science and technology. Canada played a prominent role in the Agency in 1973 through its participation in the Programs Committee, the Administrative Council and the General Conference.

During the General Conference, the secretariat, which took office when the Agency came into existence, was replaced. Dankoulo Dan Dicko, the former Minister of Education of Niger, was named Secretary-General, replacing Jean-Marc Léger, whose term was expiring, and a Canadian, Claude Roquet, Director General of the Department's Bureau of Co-ordination, was elected to one of the Four Assistant Secretary-General positions.

The 1973 General Conference of the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation for French-speaking Countries was held in Belgium. The conference was the highlight of a festival at which these countries were the guests of the City of Liège.

The invitation to hold the 1973 conference in Brussels and Liège, which Belgium extended to the member countries in 1971, led to the development of "le Mois de la Francité". The citizens of Liège invited the French-speaking countries to hold their meetings during a month-long series of events, including academic seminars, exhibitions, a young people's

drama festival and public dances. Canada participated in this undertaking in several ways. The Government of Canada and the governments of Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba and New Brunswick in turn organized presentations dealing with the principal economic, social and cultural aspects of the country.

One of the Agency's most noteworthy achievements in the field of teaching is l'Ecole internationale de Bordeaux, which comprises a training centre in modern management techniques and a centre for initiation into the problems of the Third World. A practical training course is offered in Canada every year for African and European students, and in Europe for Canadians.

In addition, Canada follows the example of other Agency countries extending an annual welcome to visiting youth groups from various member countries. In 1973, under the theme of socio-cultural recreation, Canada was host to some socio-cultural "animators" from France and the French West Indies, Ivory Coast, Niger, Lebanon and Mali.

The Program of Scientific and Technical Information is one that Canada considers particularly important. Its purpose is to provide for faster dissemination of scientific information among the Agency's members, and particularly among their research institutions and official services.

Canada undertook to act as host to the International Youth Festival organized by the Agency, which was to take place in Quebec City from August 13 to 24, 1974. This original artistic and sports festival would serve, it was hoped, to

place the French-speaking Community on display in all the richness and diversity of its various cultures.

Particular mention should be made of a Canadian proposal put forward by Gérard Pelletier, Minister of Communications and chairman of the Canadian delegation, and approved by the General Conference, which could lay the groundwork for a new Agency program of great interest to Canada. The proposal relates to the fields of communications and the transmission of information by the press and news agencies, radio, television and film, books and periodicals. It envisages as a first objective a review of current arrangements for the exchange of information among French-speaking countries, and thereafter the development of new or improved channels to facilitate and increase the flow of information of mutual interest.

In addition to the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, the Canadian Government continued its active participation in two other international French-speaking associations — namely, the Conference of Ministers of Education of French-speaking Countries, held in Paris in 1973, and the Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers in Abidjan. Canada will be host to this latter conference when it is held in Montebello in August 1974, just prior to the International Youth Festival.

As part of this conference, a seminar on local, regional and national athletic sports events was held in Quebec City in May 1973, attended by 20 delegates who were for the most part youth