

Federal-provincial relations

The Department's Federal-Provincial Co-ordination Division was established in September 1967 to expand the Canadian Government's capacity to satisfy the international aspirations of provincial authorities and facilitate their legitimate international activities.

The division seeks to keep the Department informed of provincial aims, aspirations and policies relating to international questions. It serves as a tool for the development of effective co-operation by visits to provincial capitals and the co-ordination, with provincial intergovernmental secretariats or the equivalent, of the activities of provincial government departments, the preparation of missions abroad and liaison with other federal departments and agencies. Officers maintain a continuous dialogue with provincial officials and visit them regularly.

The division ensures that information from provincial governments is brought to bear on the aspects of foreign policy that have a special interest for the provinces, whether or not an issue falls within provincial jurisdiction.

The Department has continued to expand the wide range of services to the provinces. It makes available its telecommunications network, as well as the facilities and services of missions abroad. It maintains a system for the regular distribution to the provinces of information and documentation on the international aspects of matters of provincial concern. The division also ensures that all provincial documents relating to international matters are transmitted to authorities in Ottawa. It facilitates provincial contacts with foreign governments on matters within the internal responsibility of the provinces.

Both levels of government have co-operated effectively in various fields involving international relations. The liaison function of the division was illustrated by the publication in August 1976 of the OECD study on educational policies in Canada and by the signing by Canada, following lengthy consultations with the provinces, of two United Nations human-rights covenants and an op-

tional protocol. Major international conferences in 1976 with significant provincial participation included the World Conference on Employment, held in conjunction with the annual conference of the International Labour Organization, and the UN *Habitat* conference in Vancouver. There were also extensive discussions between federal and provincial authorities in preparation for the UN Conference on Water to be held at Mar del Plata, Argentina, in March 1977.

The Information-Flow Program was created in 1973 to provide the provinces with information from the Canadian Embassy in Washington on the policies and activities of the United States Government in certain areas of provincial interest. The program encompassed the transmission of this information by oral briefings and exchanges of visits by officials, as well as by written reports and documents.

When the Information-Flow Program began, only Ontario took part. However, the results and provincial response were so favourable that the program was expanded to include Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland and Nova Scotia; it is hoped that it will soon include all the provinces. In this expansion of the program, the topics covered have widened from those that are largely economic in orientation to such diverse subjects as United States policies concerning the development of fisheries, social policies and energy and environmental topics.

Ottawa and Québec signed a new federal-provincial immigration agreement late in 1975. The new agreement improved co-operative measures the federal and provincial governments would use to encourage the movement of French-speaking, or potentially French-speaking, immigrants to Quebec. These measures made possible a more rapid exchange of information on immigration, more recruitment missions and an active role for the province during the selection process. As a result of the agreement, the Quebec government opened an immigration office in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in 1976.