

Chapter 8

INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL RELATIONS

Projecting our national character abroad through the expression of a broad range of human accomplishments, international cultural relations (ICR) programs embrace the arts (performing arts, visual arts, literature); academic relations (Canadian studies, scholarships and exchanges); and sport. They contribute to the achievement of Canada's foreign policy and trade goals by influencing decision makers and opinion leaders of major foreign partners through cultural and intellectual excellence. An innovative cultural presence abroad reinforces an image of Canada as a sophisticated, multi-faceted industrial society. In the arts, scholarship and sport, Canadians require international exposure to develop professionally, and by winning recognition abroad, to realize greater rewards.

Canadian posts abroad actively assist artists in organizing performances, exhibitions and sales of their work, using knowledge of the local market to help secure the widest possible exposure. Academic relations are the base on which an in-depth understanding and respect for Canada is constructed over time. Foreign scholars write about us; they educate future generations of leaders; and they advise government, business and the press.

Cultural policy

The Cultural Policy Division is developing a dynamic policy for the conduct of Canada's ICR. An instrument that can foster recognition of Canada as a nation that offers attractive opportunities in political, economic, tourism as well as cultural terms, thus serving the entire range of our interests abroad, it will focus on specific audiences in priority countries.

Cultural and educational industries are emerging as major economic sectors. The Department has increased efforts to support their international marketing activity. Arts promotion programs operate as the primary market development instrument abroad for cultural products, by cultivating audiences and providing support for the commercial promotion of books, records, films, video and art. To remain competitive, Canada must promote the sale of goods and services in the education field, such as training programs and packages, textbooks, education films, etc. The Department has taken the lead among interested departments in developing and gathering data on these industries. Market development strategies to guide trade, political and cultural personnel at posts in supporting marketing efforts were also begun in 1985-86.

UNESCO

Canada played a leading role in a major international effort to promote and maintain structural and program changes within UNESCO across a broad spectrum of its activities. The role and authority of the Executive Board, of which Canada's Ambassador and Permanent Delegate was an influential member, took on renewed vigour. The Board played a decisive role in tackling many of the serious and fundamental

problems confronting UNESCO. The momentum of the reform movement continued throughout 1985. The twenty-third General Conference held in Sofia, Bulgaria in October and November 1985 was conducted in the spirit of conciliation, with all member states stressing reasonable solutions rather than controversy. The successful conclusion, accompanied by welcome signals that the process of revitalization would be sustained, convinced Canada to retain its membership, although the United Kingdom regrettably withdrew at the end of 1985.

International sport

Activities continued throughout 1985-86 to facilitate travel, accommodation, public relations and news coverage for Canadian athletes participating in international competitions such as the World Cup of Hockey in Moscow, the World Cup of Soccer in Mexico City and the Commonwealth Games in Edinburgh. The Department is also involved in co-ordinating several aspects of the preparations leading up to the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary. The Minister of Sport of the People's Republic of China visited Ottawa, Toronto and Calgary. A Canada-PRC memorandum of understanding on sports exchanges was signed.

Rick Hansen began his round-the-world wheelchair tour in 1985 to raise funds for spinal cord research. Assisted by the Department and our posts he succeeded in greatly enhancing Canada's image to a vast cross-section of observers not reached by more usual means.

Arts promotion

The Arts Promotion Division provides support to professional Canadian artists and cultural organizations touring overseas. The program is available to all professional Canadian artists in: the performing arts, including music, dance and theatre; the visual arts, including video; and literature. Priority is given to countries where Canada has significant political, trade, economic or tourism interests. Individuals and groups from all regions of Canada contribute to the increasing international appreciation of Canada's achievements. Canadian artists thus acquire international reputations, expand their sources of income and express Canada's competitiveness and excellence on a world-wide scale.

Although Western Europe and the United States have been principal targets for the Canadian cultural community, the Department, recognizing growing trade interests, is encouraging tours to other regions of importance to Canada also, particularly to Pacific Rim countries.

In 1985-86, the Department provided over 140 grants which benefited more than 950 Canadian performers, artists, and writers. Among the more significant tours undertaken with departmental assistance were those by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra and the National Arts Centre Orchestra to