

Other Forms of Support

In addition to infrastructural support for the CARP, the CPC must provide another important support function: advocacy.

As an advocacy group the CPC should promote Antarctic science, stress its importance to government and granting agencies, help scientists resolve special problems in Antarctic work, and seek an appropriate level of financial support. To be effective in influencing decision makers, the CPC will require access at senior management levels; the prestige of the CPC and the calibre of its Board of Directors would seem to ensure this. The CPC also needs to assess clearly current conditions, analyse associated problems, and propose practicable solutions to improve the situation. CARPEX, with its "front-line" experience in Antarctica, will, in most, cases, be best placed to provide documentation of this type.

Two current issues are: the cost of field maintenance for U.S. scientists at some Canadian research stations for bipolar research groups as compared with the costs of similar services for Canadian scientists at McMurdo Station in Antarctica; and the adequacy of NSERC grants to support fieldwork in the Antarctic. Already some progress seems to have been made regarding the first item.

The primary targets for a lobbying effort on the part of the CPC would be top managers in government departments and agencies. However, lobbying at the political level would also be helpful—even necessary—in many cases. For lobbying to be effective, it is important to have a constituency that expresses interests and concerns about issues. At present the "Antarctic constituency" in Canada is limited to a small group of scientists; however, more than 200 Canadians visit Antarctica as tourists each year, so the number of Canadians with firsthand knowledge of the continent is growing rapidly.¹¹ CPC/CARPEX should explore ways of informing that group about their existence and current activities.

¹¹ Some of these have formed the Montreal Antarctic Society to promote Antarctic studies.