

# Chapter 9

## INFORMATION PROGRAMS AND PRESS SERVICES

### Press Office

The Press Office works with Canadian and foreign journalists in Canada to promote greater public awareness and knowledge of Canadian foreign policy issues and initiatives. It provides information to the media on all aspects of Canada's foreign policy and departmental operations. To assist the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Ministers for International Trade and External Relations in promoting the government's foreign policy objectives, the Press Office arranges media briefings, organizes press conferences and generally encourages ongoing media interest in Canadian foreign policy.

The Press Office also participates in the Department's planning of media-oriented and related activities and participates in interdepartmental task force meetings, assisting senior management in developing communication strategies on high-visibility issues. For example, Canadian assistance during the Mexican earthquake and Colombian volcano disasters, the highjacking of the "Achille Lauro" cruise ship and the Egyptian plane, the evacuation after the Chernobyl nuclear accident, etc. The Press Office also provides the Ministers' offices with indications of current media interest and issues that could be of specific interest to the Ministers and the Department.

When the Prime Minister or any of the three External Affairs Ministers travel abroad on official visits, the Press Office arranges background briefings, providing journalists with relevant economic and political data to place each visit in its proper foreign policy context. Similar arrangements are made when foreign dignitaries make official visits to Canada. The Press Office reviews all departmental press releases and arranges interviews, photo opportunities, press conferences and the accreditation of foreign and Canadian journalists wishing to cover international conferences in Canada, or official visits to Canada by foreign dignitaries.

During the 1985-86 fiscal year, the Press Office distributed more than 300 news releases to media outlets and other key groups across Canada. The Press Office provides a daily telegraphic news summary to all of the Department's posts abroad to keep them informed of major events in Canada; it also monitors the electronic media, producing approximately 1 000 news transcripts annually for use within the Department and at posts abroad.

### International expositions

The Department is responsible for managing Canadian participation at international expositions abroad. In 1985, Tsukuba, Japan hosted a specialized international exhibition on science and technology in relation to dwellings and their surroundings. Three million visitors saw the Canadian pavilion, which consisted of three cinema halls. Daily shows were given in front of the building and were viewed by hundreds of

thousands of other visitors. British Columbia and Alberta participated on an individual basis within the Canadian pavilion.

From May 2 to October 13, 1986, Canada will host Expo 86 in Vancouver, a specialized exposition whose theme is Transportation and Communications. The Department's responsibilities include international promotion, visits by federal ministers on national days, co-ordination of special events with our missions abroad, etc. Expo 86 is assured of the participation of 52 countries and two international organizations.

Two other international expositions are presently being prepared: Expo 88 in Brisbane, Australia, on the theme of Recreation in the Age of Technology, will mark the bicentenary of Australia; and Expo 92 in Seville and Chicago, commemorating the 500th anniversary of the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus.

The Department is also responsible for managing more than 36 information exhibits designed to improve awareness of Canadian society in foreign countries.

### Information programs abroad

The principal objectives of the External Information Services Division, working in close co-operation with the Department's geographic and functional branches, were to strengthen Canada's image abroad as a modern, stable, bilingual, multi-lingual society, an economically and technologically advanced country, a reliable trading partner and a sound destination for investment. The main target audiences abroad were political, business and academic leaders, decision makers and opinion formers, including importers, investors, government officials, business organizations, the media, educational and cultural institutions and others, such as teachers and students.

To support the promotion of Canadian exports at 47 international trade fairs in which more than 600 Canadian companies participated, more than 280 publications and other materials, including booklets, pamphlets, folders, press releases and fact sheets, were produced in English, French and a variety of foreign languages. Publications were also produced for promotional use with foreign importers on Canadian capabilities in several specific sectors, including electronic products, defence products, integrated office equipment, mining equipment, swine, security products and cold-weather clothing and equipment.

*Canada Weekly* and *Hebdo Canada*, the Department's former weekly newsletters for distribution abroad, were replaced in September 1985 by *Canada Reports* and *Reportage Canada*, which appear every two weeks. Although they continued to provide information on Canadian foreign policy and Canadian developments and events in cultural and other fields, their content was reoriented to place added emphasis on developments in trade, industry and technology. A reader-