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INFORMATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS

In the field of information the Department of External Affairs has two main responsibilities: outside Canada, to convey to the citizens and governments of other countries a knowledge and understanding of Canada and the Canadian people; and to make available within Canada information on Canada's external policies and the work of the department. The Department is responsible for the co-ordination of Canadian information activities abroad and, in most countries, also has the direct responsibility for the conduct of our information activities, which include the dissemination of information concerning our economic and cultural interests as well as our external policies.

Within Canada the Department makes available current and background policy information on international issues of concern to this country. Through the Information Division, it deals with requests from the Canadian public for information about Canada's external relations and produces and distributes to interested organizations and individuals a variety of publications.

1. Information on International Organizations

During 1955 close liaison was maintained with the Information Service of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Close relations were also established with the newly formed Canadian Atlantic Co-ordinating Committee, which is the Canadian branch of the Atlantic Treaty Association, an international non-governmental organization formed to support NATO. Publications issued by NATO in Paris, as well as those produced by the Department, were distributed to a large number of Canadian libraries, universities, and other organizations and to individuals interested in the activities of NATO. The Information Division also assisted in the preparation of a booklet on Canada which will be issued by NATO as part of a series on NATO countries. Arrangements were made for participation by Canadian journalists in NATO tours in Europe, as well as for a NATO tour of Canada by journalists from other member countries.

Information about the United Nations was provided in Canada in co-operation with the United Nations Association, and during the tenth session of the United Nations General Assembly the Canadian delegation in New York gave special assistance to Canadian and other newspapers. The delegation's information officers, working closely with the United Nations press corps and the Secretariat, provided material on Canada's position on issues under consideration and arranged press, radio, and television interviews with members of the delegation in order to secure a wide understanding of Canadian views and policies.

The Department co-operated with the Department of Trade and Commerce in disseminating information about Canada's participation in the Colombo Plan. Arrangements were also made for the supply of information material to the Colombo Plan Information Unit.