

Acid rain causes forest damage

A report on a study being conducted in central New Brunswick shows that acid rain is causing widespread damage to the country's vast forest lands.

The report was presented at an international scientific conference in Finland by scientist Kevin Percy of the Canadian Forestry Service in Fredericton who is conducting the tests. The testing is expected to have major implications for the future of the country's multi-billion-dollar forest industry. The largest industry in the country, forestry is worth more than \$10 billion in eastern Canada alone.

The testing has already yielded the hardest scientific evidence yet that acid rain seriously retards forest growth, something long suspected by environmentalists.

The New Brunswick experiments, started a year ago, have been completed on four tree species to date — red and white spruce and red and Jack pine. The growth of all four was affected significantly.

Germinated over a period of five weeks, the trees grew fewer and smaller needles, had a retarded germination rate and suffered from reduced seedling productivity. Forestry experts are waiting for the full results before making any official comment but the findings have already been passed to others in the international scientific community.

Mr. Percy said he duplicated actual acid-rain conditions as closely as possible in conducting the experiments. The acid-rain solution used was similar in content to that which falls on New Brunswick forests. The same drop size was used, and the same growing season and rainfall rate was simulated.

Normal snow and rain, which is slightly acidic, is described by scientists as having a pH of 5.6, the technical method of expressing acid levels. Acid rain, which is ten times more acidic than normal, has a pH of 4.6

Mr. Percy's experiments involved tests not only at these levels but at pH readings of 3.6, a hundred times greater than normal, and 2.6, a thousand times greater than normal. The results showed significant retarded growth at pH 4.6 as well as at the more concentrated levels.

Acid rain has already destroyed hundreds of Canadian lakes. It is caused by pollution which rises into the air from industrial smokestacks and falls back to earth as contaminated rain and snow, often hundreds of miles from its source.

International law meeting in Montreal draws record numbers

United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar was the keynote speaker at the opening ceremonies of the sixtieth conference of the International Law Association held in Montreal, August 30 to September 4.

The conference, which was attended by then Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan (now Justice Minister), was supported by the Department of External Affairs. The 724 participants from 60 countries set a record attendance for the conference with the largest number coming from Canada.

Among the European delegates were two judges from the International Court of Justice in The Hague, His Excellency Judge Hermann Mosler and His Excellency Sir Robert Jennings.

In his address to the delegates, Secretary-General de Cuellar spoke of the UN's contribution towards the development of international law, stressing the value of the new convention on the law of the sea.

Other subjects on the conference program were: human rights, international criminal law and international terrorism,

medical and humanitarian law, air law and space law, international water resources and environment conservation, economic affairs including the new international economic order, international monetary law and the exclusive economic zone.

In addition to working sessions, some delegates made one-day excursions to Quebec City and Ottawa. In Quebec City delegates met with Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs Jacques-Yvan Morin, while in Ottawa they were received by Governor General Edward Schreyer and by Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan.

The International Law Association has its headquarters in London, England and comprises 45 national branches. Its membership, which exceeds 4 500, consists predominantly of scholars, judges, law officers and advisers in their respective countries.

The association has close relations with the United Nations and some members of the UN's International Court of Justice at The Hague have been active participants in the work of the association.



Participants at the International Law Association Meeting (from left to right): Quebec Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs Jacques-Yvan Morin; President of the I.C.A.O. Council, Dr. Assad Kotaite; Secretary-General of the United Nations Javier Perez de Cuellar; Incoming President of the International Law Association, Canadian Branch Emile Colas; Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan; Representative for Montreal Mayor Drapeau Abe Cohen; and President of the International Law Association, Dr. Nicolas M. Matte.