

Where questions of an international political character are involved, primary responsibility for initiating policy recommendations and carrying out any discussions with the United States rests with the Department of External Affairs. Many of the Canada-U.S.A. questions that arise, however, actively engage the interests of several departments, and in these cases policy is formulated jointly.

One instrument of this process is the interdepartmental committee. (See Part 4). Formal meetings, however, represent only one element in the process and perhaps not the most important one. During the course of day-to-day operations, there are a variety of informal contacts, such as regular discussions by telephone, circulation of draft papers and discussions in small ad hoc groups. In addition, it is established practice for the originators of telegraphic reports to send copies to all departments and agencies having an interest in the subject matter. Those receiving such reports are often sufficiently familiar with each other's respective interests and views to be able to decide upon response or other action on the basis of brief discussions by telephone among those directly concerned. On more important subjects, the interdepartmental position would be developed through meetings, formal or informal, of the officials concerned. Where questions of Government policy arise the matter is referred for consideration by Ministers or by Cabinet.

Communications to the United States required during or after this process would normally be channelled through the Canadian Embassy in Washington or the United States Embassy in Ottawa. On occasion, Ministers or officials concerned may have direct discussions with their counterparts in Washington or Ottawa. A statistical summary of visits in 1968 and the first eight months of this year is attached as Appendix "B". An alternative course in some cases is to schedule the subject for examination by one of the joint Canada-United States organizations discussed later in this paper.

The foregoing provides a general picture of the way in which official business is conducted with the United States on the most important subjects and those that involve significant interests of more than one department. On subjects of narrower interest, it is accepted practice for Canadian departments and official agencies to deal directly with their counterparts abroad, and in the case of the United States the range of such dealings is very wide. Examples would include liaison on technical subjects between Canadian Forces Headquarters and the United States Armed Services, continuing contacts between officials of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce in Ottawa and the United States Department of Commerce, or procurement contracts regularly negotiated between the Canadian Department of Supply and the United States Government. In addition, Canadian Ministers and officials responsible for various fields that are primarily domestic in nature periodically exchange views with their U.S.A. counterparts.

Action by External Affairs in this category of relationships varies a good deal from case to case. In areas where relationships are largely technical, there may be no need for External Affairs to become involved at all. In other areas, External Affairs' role is limited to maintaining a watching brief or facilitating contacts between competent Canadian and U.S.A. representatives. An important consideration is that there be adequate co-ordination when questions of policy arise or when there is divergence in the interests of a number of Canadian departments