

tion, it has provided oral and written replies to numerous requests from university professors, journalists, writers and researchers. In November alone, for example, about 50 requests were received.

The Oral History Program, introduced several years ago to obtain firsthand contemporary verbal accounts from ministers and senior departmental officials directly involved in important events, is continuing, and a number of interviews have been conducted. The transcription of these recordings, however, is a long-term undertaking, the pace of which is determined by the modest allocation available for this purpose.

Canada has played an active role in the Pan-American Institute of Geography and History, a specialized agency of the Organization of American States. Its activities have been of two kinds, the preparation of reports on the meetings of the Geography Commission, which were held from May 12 to 16 at the Conference Centre in Ottawa, and the organization and direction of a meeting of the Geophysics Commission, which also took place in the Conference Centre, from September 27 to October 1. The latter meeting, which dealt with the prediction of earthquakes, attracted more than 40 geophysicists from Canada, the United States and most of the countries of Central and South America. This working meeting was made possible by the close collaboration between External Affairs and the Gravity and Geodynamics Division of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources.

Information and public relations

The sophistication of mass communications since the Second World War has made public opinion an increasingly significant factor in the formation of the foreign policy of many governments. This, perhaps inevitably, has affected the conduct of diplomacy. Traditionally, international relations have been conducted principally through direct diplomatic contacts and between governments. Today it may no longer be enough for an ambassador to explain his country's views to ministers and officials of the country to which

he is accredited; he may also find it necessary to inform or seek to influence the general public, or special sections of it, in his area of accreditation. It is also important to promote within Canada a broader interest in, and a greater knowledge of, Canadian foreign-policy objectives.

During the year, all Canadian embassies, high commissions and consulates undertook some kind of information program. Such activity was most intensive in the United States, Western Europe and Japan, because of the importance Canada attaches to these areas and the benefits it expects from the distribution of Canadian information within them. The general direction of the information program abroad was, of course, the responsibility of the Department in Ottawa. Large quantities of information material were produced at headquarters, and a variety of projects were devised to convey the messages of the Government information program to particular foreign audiences in terms suited to their special needs. Much of this work consisted of the routine answering of inquiries and the distribution of materials reflecting Canadian policy and Canadian interests in various regions. Films, displays, audio-visual aids, publications, speeches and seminars were employed in the effort to elicit a favourable response to Canadian attitudes and achievements from "priority" audiences and influential individuals and to create an understanding of Canadian aims. The purpose of all this activity has been to project the image of Canada abroad as a distinctive, advanced society that has much to offer the rest of the world.

To help them with their local programs, Canadian posts received, on a regular basis, briefing on Government policy for use in their contacts with foreign governments, the news media and the public, as well as the texts of statements and speeches, press scans and press guidance on a variety of domestic- and foreign-policy issues, and background material on issues of an urgent nature. The Department produced a variety of publications — in English, French and several foreign languages — on Canadian themes, directed at selected