

OCTOBER 1970 / NO. 4

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# Canada

## today / d'aujourd'hui

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■ Like the rest of mankind, Canadians trouble the earth. Like everybody else, they have been dumping sewage, industrial wastes and poisonous chemicals into their oceans, lakes and rivers.

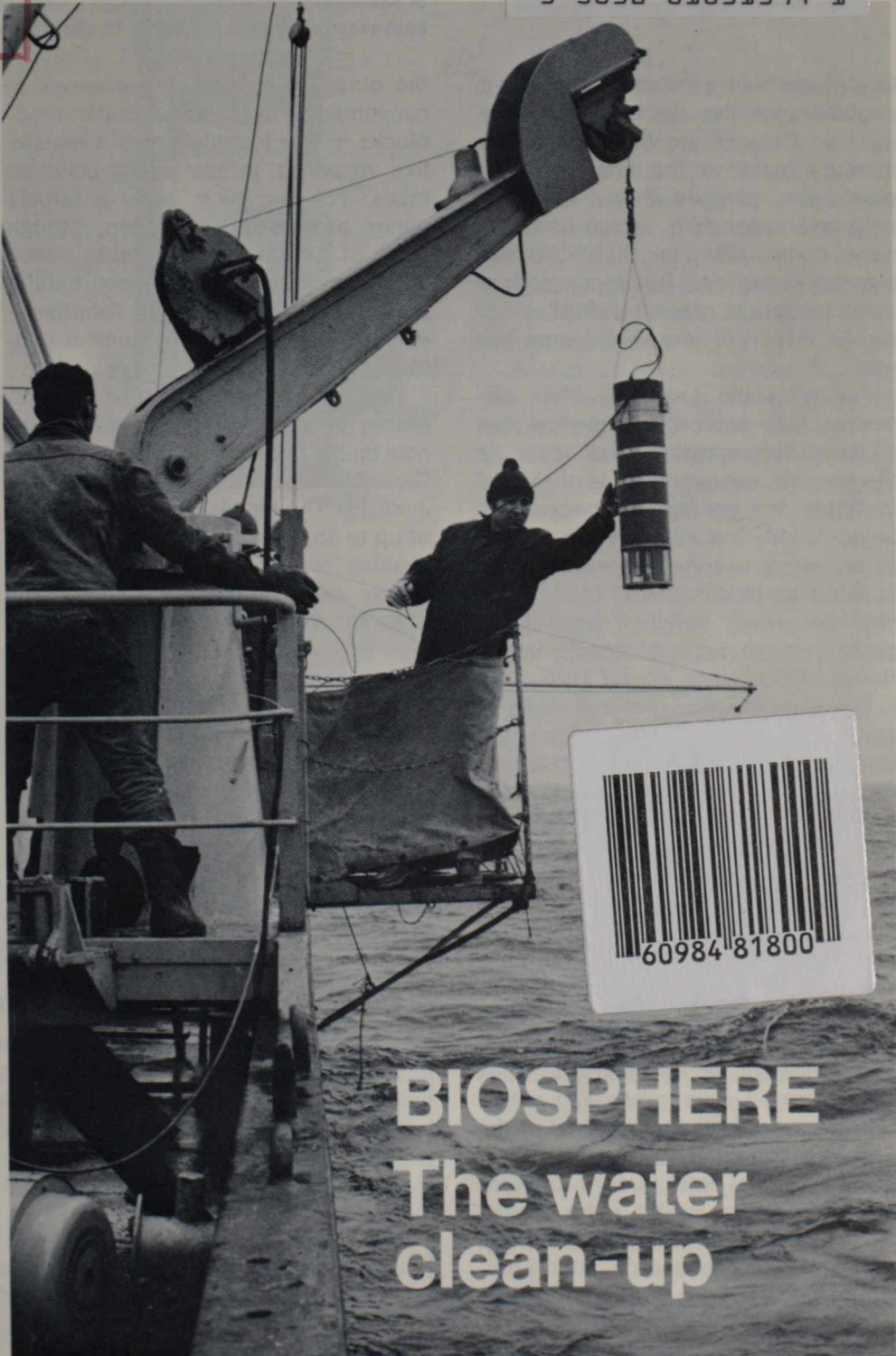
Oil, phosphates, sewage, pesticide residues and all the metals and chemicals that can pollute water resources: Canada has experienced most of them. And if the country is now turning determinedly toward water pollution control, it may be because the situation threatens to become uncontrollable.

Like everybody else, Canadians must now worry that man's pillage of the biosphere is approaching that critical point where—as U.S. ecologist Lamont C. Cole theorizes—"there is a real possibility that he can destroy its ability to support life."

All pollution contributes to the environmental crisis. But some pollutants, such as arsenic, cyanide or mercury, pose an immediate threat to health and even to life itself.

Mercury pollution, for example, was first discovered in Canada in the Saskatchewan River during November, 1969. The Federal Department of Fisheries and Forestry immediately ordered all fish taken from the system put under quarantine, and initiated a regular monitoring program at its Freshwater Institute in Winnipeg. Then a graduate student in Ontario discovered last March that a wall-eyed pike caught in Lake St. Clair, a widening of the St. Clair River between Lake Erie and Lake Michigan, contained seven parts per million of mercury—well above the one half part per million considered safe in Canada and the United States.

The pollution was traced to a sprawling chemical complex about 50 miles north of Detroit, on the banks of the St. Clair River near Sarnia, On-



### BIOSPHERE

## The water clean-up

Canadian research vessels monitor the water quality of the Great Lakes.