

Media Relations and Information Activities in Canada

The Department through the Press Office explains the orientations of Canada's foreign policy to the Canadian media and makes known the views of the Secretary of State for External Affairs on international events. This Office keeps the Minister and the Department informed on the international relations content of the printed and electronic media; it arranges briefings, press conferences and meetings with the Minister. Canadian journalists going abroad are assisted in various ways by the Department and posts. By means of a daily press scan and other reporting of Canadian news and events, the Press Office and other branches of the Department assist Canadian posts in their media relations work abroad mentioned in the preceding chapter. The foreign media are also informed and assisted in various ways through regular contact with foreign correspondents covering the Canadian scene from their Canadian or overseas base.

When the Prime Minister or the Secretary of State for External Affairs travels abroad in an official capacity, accompanied by Canadian journalists, to take part in the activities of international organizations, the Press Office arranges a briefing to explain the objectives of the visit and provides a press kit containing all necessary background material. In 1978, arrangements of this sort were made for the Prime Minister's visit to Washington for the NATO Summit and for his participation in the Bonn Economic Summit, as well as when the Secretary of State for External Affairs participated in the OECD Council meeting in Paris and then visited Turkey, Cyprus, China and Japan. Appropriate media arrangements were made in Canada on the occasion of visits by foreign dignitaries.

The Department also maintains programs intended to develop close relations with the academic community both to provide interested professors and students with information about Canadian foreign relations and to develop a dialogue between members of that community and members of the Department. In 1978 the following activities served these objectives. Departmental officers gave over 225 lectures and seminars at universities. Senior officers freed from departmental duties for one year so that they might devote their time to teaching, writing, doing research and holding seminars on international relations were at the Universities of Victoria, Laval, King's College and Western Ontario. The Department provided financial support for 13 academic conferences, as well as for speakers at a number of other conferences on international themes.

One area of departmental activity of close interest both to members of the academic community and to other researchers and writers on Canadian foreign relations is that of historical affairs. The Department both carries out its own research and publication in the historical field and arranges access to archives for scholars. In the former field, work in 1978 was concentrated on Volume 9 of Documents on