

Tough laws to clean up environment

The Environmental Contaminants Act, which was given royal assent in December, provides Canada with a new tool for protection of the environment, which is claimed to be among the most advanced of its type in the world.

The Act gives the Federal Government the power to acquire information about substances that may be harmful to human health and the environment, to take measures — in consultation with the provinces — to prevent or control their use, and to exact fines of up to \$100,000 or imprisonment for up to two years for non-compliance.

Industry is required to furnish information about contaminants. Details on substances being used, as well as on those proposed, will include data on the rate and extent of release into the environment, the effects on human and other life, and measures being taken to control release. Industry will be required to carry out the tests necessary to provide this information.

Based on this information, the Government, in consultation with the provinces, will demand any desirable preventive measures, ranging from limitations or controls to outright ban on the use, manufacture or importation of hazardous contaminants.

Until now the tendency has been to take remedial action to correct environmental damage that has already occurred. The new Act, however, attempts to anticipate and to institute a continuing risk-evaluation system, at the national level, to monitor old and new chemicals and adapt control methods to specific cases.

Under the new Act new chemicals that are expected to be dispersed widely in the environment will be tested and evaluated; and existing chemicals already on the market will be subject to restrictions, if necessary, and to periodic impact reassessment.

Assessment criteria

Environment Canada experts will generally base their assessment on five characteristics — the extent to which the substance persists in the environment (i.e., is not biodegradable); combines with biological tissues and passes through the food chain; spreads widely through air and water by natural transfer mechanisms; can be retrieved,

once dispersed in the environment; can induce biological changes, even though present in trace quantities.

The Government will call for companies importing, handling or using certain substances in manufacturing processes to report the amount involved, its toxicity, dispersion in the environment and concentration.

Railway cars for Mexico

An order for railway equipment worth \$76 million, from the Mexican National Railway company has been negotiated by Hawker Siddeley Canada.

Two hundred passenger cars will be built at the company's Canadian Car Division, Thunder Bay, Ontario, and delivery is planned in 1976-77. The cars will be of the long lightweight design pioneered by Hawker Siddeley for the Ontario government's GO Transit commuter rail network in southern Ontario.

Canadian representative to ECOSOC

Secretary of State for External Affairs Allan MacEachen recently announced the appointment of Geoffrey F. Bruce as Canadian representative to the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC). Mr. Bruce who, in 1973, was appointed Minister and Deputy Permanent Representative of Canada to the United Nations in New York, will continue in that position while concurrently meeting his new ECOSOC responsibilities.

ECOSOC was expanded from 27 to 54 members in 1973. Canada was elected as a full member by the General Assembly of the United Nations for the year 1974 and then for a further three-year term, which began in 1975. Mr. Bruce succeeds Ambassador Norman Berliss, who in October 1975 became Canadian Ambassador to Denmark.

ECOSOC holds two main sessions every year, the first one in the spring in New York, the second in the summer in Geneva. As Canadian representative at ECOSOC sessions, Mr. Bruce will serve under the general authority of Canada's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York or Geneva, as the case may be.

Before his New York assignment, Mr.



Geoffrey F. Bruce

Bruce was Director of the Scientific Relations and Environmental Problems Division of the Department of External Affairs. He joined the Canadian foreign service of the Department of External Affairs in 1952. He has served in Israel, Sri Lanka, Austria and at the United Nations.

As well as Consul and Counsellor in the Canadian Embassy in Vienna, Mr. Bruce was the Alternate Governor for Canada on the Board of Governors of the International Atomic Energy Agency for more than four years.

U of T wins Yeats publishing project

The University of Toronto has won the right over international competition to publish the vast quantity of unpublished work of the Irish writer W.B. Yeats. The coup is regarded as the most important achievement by Canada in the international literary world since the acquisition of the Bertrand Russell papers by McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario.

Some 84 volumes are planned in the Yeats series, and the publishing schedule extends to 1990. Included will be all the unpublished work of Yeats, who died in 1939, and the Yeats family — poems, plays, stories, novels, essays, occult writings, diaries, memoirs, letters, etc. At least 40 Yeats' scholars, many of them in Canada, will be involved as editors of the various volumes.

Most of the material is in the National Library of Ireland, although some