



Environment UPDATE

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Challenge of the Forests

There has long been a myth about the almost infinite productive capacity of Canada's forests.

Consequently, companies and governments have tended to look at the short term rather than the long term. In effect, we have mined the virgin forests and given little thought to the future crop. A recently released discussion paper on a Forest Sector Strategy for Canada, prepared by the Canadian Forestry Service of Environment Canada, shows how those attitudes have brought us to a crisis.

The industry already faces local shortages of economically available timber and this situation will worsen unless forest management becomes much more intensive.

The federal and provincial governments, along with industry and professional foresters, will have to work hard at renewing our forest resource base, while engaging in research and developing new markets.

One of the major problems facing the forest sector is the shortage of skilled manpower.

Canada's six forestry schools are turning out about 335 BScF students annually and about 70 postgraduate students. But the already acute shortage of

skilled manpower will worsen markedly as forest renewal and research efforts are expanded. Some 800 graduates and 150 postgraduate students in forestry will be needed annually for the next 10 years.

To train this manpower the forestry schools will need additional support from the federal government, the provinces and industry. We must inform young Canadians of the crisis in the forest sector, the career opportunities and the challenge. We can do something. The industry can be stabilized and indeed launched on a new period of expansion, provided that the challenge of forestry is understood and accepted. I know that young Canadians will understand and accept the challenge.

John Roberts
Minister

Niagara Update

This report is based on a speech by Environment Minister John Roberts, delivered at the Third National Conference on Waste Management in Toronto by Dr. E.R. Slater, Ontario regional director for Environment Canada.

The chemical waste situation in the Niagara area could well serve as a microcosm for the entire problem of toxic chemicals management. One can recite the whole dreary litany that we've all come to know so well: disposal of toxic wastes in a manner that conformed to standard practice decades ago but has now proved to be grossly inadequate; lack of coordination between government and industry planners; a public that feels it has been kept in the dark and is now embittered and angry; constant and paralyzing wrangling over who is at fault and who is to pay for the cleanup -- the script has been all too predictable. The situation is further complicated by the fact that three levels of government are involved, on each side of the border.

The real tragedy in all this is that while lawyers argue over responsibility, and while debates about who is to pay drag on and on, the hazardous chemicals that have leached into the water table continue their insidious work.

Two examples were cited. First, the Hyde Park landfill in Niagara Falls, New York. From 1953 to 1975, 80 000 tons of chemical wastes, including materials contaminated with dioxin, were deposited at this location. Dioxin has been detected in the sediments of the creek leading from the site to the Niagara River. Second, the Niagara Falls sewage treatment plant in New York, which began operation in December of 1977. Almost from the start it had

serious problems, and its carbon filter adsorption beds were taken out of operation after only six months. Because of this, industrial effluent containing toxic chemicals is discharged into the Niagara River after inadequate treatment.

Regrettably, said Mr. Roberts, the steps being taken to rectify the situation at the plant are proceeding only slowly. Even with the recent U.S. announcement by the U.S. on steps to correct the situation, "we still aren't out of the woods." An adequate plant would not be fully operational for at least two years after the first day remedial work began.

In its efforts to stay on top of the situation, Canada has asked repeatedly for assurance that the various water quality agreements will not be violated, and it has also asked for cooperation in monitoring the river so that we will be able to tell exactly what hazardous wastes are contaminating our waters.

Environment Canada staff did their own sampling for the Niagara Falls sewage treatment plant, and had to invest an extraordinary amount of time and resources to monitor the progress of these issues. Studies carried out in May of this year give great cause for concern, the minister said. They confirm that pollutants are not being adequately treated before discharge into the Niagara River. In all, 41 organic compounds and heavy metals were indicated in the samples taken. These include 25 priority pollutants named by the Environmental Protection Agency in the United States.

This is not to imply that Canadians are guilt-free when it

comes to polluting the Great Lakes with hazardous wastes. There are far too many sources of pollution on our side of the border as well. Nonetheless, when all dischargers within the Niagara River's watershed are considered, the total United States point source discharge exceeds total Canadian discharge by more than two billion litres a day.

While we must be realistic in facing these facts, there is no need to give in to gloom and despair. Environment Canada has established a firm foundation on which to base effective waste management in the Niagara region. There are many precedents for fruitful international cooperation in the Great Lakes basin; the recent consultations with the U.S. government on the subject of dioxin provide but

one example. We have an effective monitoring and tracking program already in place and can analyze and track pollutants to their source with a great deal of precision. Laws are already on the books that can force polluters to clean up their act and manage hazardous waste in a responsible manner. Perhaps most important of all, the federal government has demonstrated that it is willing, even anxious, to join with provincial and local governments, and with the United States, in a coordinated effort to solve the crisis in waste management that so urgently confronts us.

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New Committee Backs Recycling

A continuing Canada-U.S. technical committee has been formed to discuss waste management projects and objectives in the Pacific northwest. Organized at a September meeting in Vancouver, it is seeking ways to increase industry awareness and government participation in recycling wastes.

Although many programs for the management of hazardous wastes are being established in the region, it was felt that the possibilities of recycling wastes had received little attention from the agencies involved.

The September meeting discussed a manifest system for the transportation of wastes between jurisdictions to ensure that responsible individuals can be readily alerted to special wastes being transported in their jurisdictions.

The meeting was attended by

representatives from the Environmental Protection Service of Environment Canada, the Waste Management Branch of the B.C. Ministry of the Environment, the Environmental Protection Agency Region 10 and representatives from the states of Alaska, Idaho, Oregon and Washington. The committee agreed to meet again next spring.

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Information

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Forest Strategy Discussion Paper Warns of Timber Shortages

The Canadian forest industry is in a good position to capitalize on growing world demand for wood products providing steps are taken to meet the major challenge of wood supply, according to a federal discussion paper released Oct. 1 by Environment Minister John Roberts. It warns that the industry already faces shortages of economically available timber and that this situation will worsen unless forest management becomes much more intensive.

The paper, prepared by the Canadian Forestry Service of Environment Canada, is part of a Forest Sector Strategy for Canada that sets out policy options for increasing the economic contribution of the forest sector. Substantial gains in export markets are projected, but Canada cannot take advantage of these unless timber supply constraints are dealt with.

In an atmosphere of federal-provincial cooperation, the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Minister (CCREM) agreed to initiatives in forestry at its meeting on Oct. 1.

As a follow-up to the Forestry Imperatives report of 1980, the provinces agreed to prepare forest renewal objectives along with costs to accomplish the work with a view to sharing these costs between the forest industry and the federal and provincial governments in an equitable manner.

A proposal for an expanded forest fire research and coordinated training program was also endorsed at the meeting of forest ministers. A federal-provincial national fire information centre will permit effective interregional and inter-provincial sharing of manpower and fire fighting resources in

emergency situations. The ministers agreed further to explore the possibility of federal-provincial coordination and expansion of forest fire fighting equipment and aircraft.

One constraint on efficient fire control has been the overall lack of major suppression equipment, especially fire bombing aircraft, combined with the impossibility of each province acquiring a sufficient reserve of equipment to respond to periodic crises.

It was also decided that an intergovernmental task force would be set up to evaluate field testing and registration of pesticides considered essential for forest management.

"The forest sector is a major component of the Canadian economy. It supports a million jobs, is the economic mainstay of much of rural Canada, and makes by far the largest net contribution to Canada's balance of payments," the forest strategy discussion paper states.

The paper details the economic contribution of the forest sector to Canada using data on direct employment, indirect employment, sales value, regional impact, trade, transportation, capital investment and tax revenues. It also notes that the direct economic contributions of the forest sector are matched by other benefits which depend on the same forest land base. Specifically, the forest resource is the backdrop of a multi-billion-dollar recreation and tourism industry; it moderates weather, regulates stream flow, minimizes soil erosion, protects fish and wildlife habitat, and is the home for many native people. The paper states that the economic, social and environmental benefits

support the claim that forest land is Canada's most valuable natural resource.

The paper notes that the Canadian forest has fallen victim to myths and slogans such as (1) Canada's timber supply is inexhaustible, (2) our forests have been managed on a sustained yield basis, and (3) a renewable resource is renewable promptly and automatically. The paper concludes that public support

for forest management will only be forthcoming when these myths are exposed.

Copies of the paper may be obtained from the Enquiries Centre, Environment Canada, 6th Floor, Place Vincent Massey, Hull, Quebec K1A 0H3.

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Climate Program Will Monitor Changes in Social and Economic Life

The Canadian Climate Program is a nationwide project designed to meet Canadians' insatiable demands for information and advice on climate. When fully developed, it will provide a complete climate data and prediction service and will be used in such areas as agriculture, forestry, water resources and transportation.

New research will offer a better understanding of the interaction of climate and oceans and this will help to improve climate prediction. The program will also spur research into problems of carbon dioxide and other contaminants causing major changes in Canada's climate, and their economic and social consequences.

Coordinator of the program, first approved by DOE in 1978, is the Atmospheric Environment Service (AES) but other services and departments such as the Canadian Forestry Service, the Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of Agriculture will participate. A meeting of the Canadian Council of Resource and Environment Ministers held in Regina last March revealed that the provinces too were greatly interested in the program, especially since many types of provincial activity are climate-linked. The program is also expected to encourage the opening of a number of

private climate consulting services.

John Sandilands, head of the AES Climate Program Office, thinks these developments offer the promise within a few years of a truly national climate program benefitting both levels of government, the universities and the private sector.

"The program would allow everyone to obtain the climate information they need when they need it," says Mr. Sandilands, who adds that the national data service will provide all available climate information, including data from northern Canada, remote mountain areas and the oceans.

Ultimately the program will allow specialists in various disciplines to coordinate their research. As climate forecasting becomes available and prediction methods are improved, more will be known on the subject of major climate change and how it will affect our social and economic life patterns.

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Taking Care with Nuclear Energy

Nuclear power is playing a vital role in Canada's drive for energy self-sufficiency. And Environment Canada has a prime responsibility to make sure that this comparatively new form of energy is safely used and developed. The generation of electricity through nuclear fission avoids some of the most severe environmental problems that plague Canada from fossil fuel combustion. On the other hand, it introduces new environmental concerns such as the control of environmental hazards from uranium mining, and the safe disposal of radioactive waste. To understand and control these environmental risks and problems requires specialized scientific knowledge and carefully developed policies.

Under the Government Organization Act of 1970, the minister has a mandate to protect and enhance the quality of the natural environment, including water, air and soil. This gives him broad authority to safeguard the environment against damage caused by any kind of energy or industrial technology.

Every scientific and technical unit of Environment Canada has some involvement with nuclear energy. Two of them are dedicated specially to nuclear concerns: the Nuclear Programs Division of the Environmental Protection Service, and the Radiochemistry Laboratory of the Environmental Conservation Service.

The department works closely with the Atomic Energy Control Board (AECB), Atomic Energy of Canada Limited (AECL) and other agencies, notably the Department of National Health and Welfare (NHW) and the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources (EMR). AECB is responsible for

licensing all uses of nuclear energy, and approving all decisions related to nuclear power of the handling and disposal of radioactive substances. Under a formal memorandum of understanding, Environment Canada advises and assists the AECB in matters concerning the environmental impact of nuclear energy.

Environment Canada working largely through inter-departmental, federal-provincial and international committees, develop standards, guidelines and objectives for permissible concentrations of radioactive substances, and helps to implement policies and regulations controlling their management and use. It cooperates with other federal and provincial agencies, in the investigation and monitoring of radioactivity in the environment that might be related to the production of fuels or power. It participates, too, in contingency planning against any accidental release of radioactive materials, and takes the lead in developing means to predict risks to populations from radioactive matter released into the air.

Meanwhile the department plays an important part in international programs concerned with nuclear energy, through the United Nations and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). It participates in United Nations studies of the effects of atomic radiation, and helps formulate international policy for the disposal of nuclear wastes at sea.

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Test Oil Release Successful

Two major experimental oil releases of the Baffin Island Oil Spill (BIOS) Project were successfully completed this summer. They were part of a four-year study to assess the impact of oil spills on arctic coasts and to test cleanup measures.

The study is being conducted near the northern tip of Baffin Island on Cape Hatt, 70 km from Pond Inlet, the nearest settlement, and about 3200 km due north of Toronto.

This year about 100 barrels of crude oil were released into one bay; a similar volume of crude oil with a dispersant, which breaks up oil and mixes it into the water, was discharged into another bay. A third bay was left uncontaminated as a control.

Contingency measures, taken before the discharges, proved successful. To the best of the scientists' knowledge, no birds or mammals inside or outside the study area came into contact with the oil. Representatives from the communities of Arctic Bay and Pond Inlet were present to observe the experiment.

An intensive sampling and analysis program began in the spring of 1980 and will continue through 1983. This allows scientists to study the fate of oil in the water and sediments and determine its effects on bottom-dwelling plants and organisms such as seaweed and clams. The major aim will be to determine whether ecosystems are damaged less by contamination with an oil and dispersant mixture than by untreated oil.

Last summer and in 1980, in a series of smaller releases, about 40 barrels of oil were discharged and then cleaned up.

Various cleanup techniques were used, some of them already in use in southern Canada but untested under arctic conditions. Other methods still not yet used extensively, such as burning oil on beaches, were also evaluated.

The \$5 million BIOS project, initiated by the federal government's Arctic Marine Oilspill Program, is managed by an international committee from Canada, Norway, United States and Britain. Northern residents have been involved throughout the planning and implementation of BIOS and support the aims of the project; in fact, the test site selected was suggested by the Pond Inlet Council.

"The successful completion of the second and most important field season ensures that the BIOS project will significantly improve Canada's ability to clean up oil spills in arctic waters," said Environment Minister John Roberts. "In view of recent discoveries of oil in the arctic and the possibility that this oil may be shipped through the Northwest Passage, Canadian officials must know the best method for dealing with spilled oil: attempting to clean it up from the shoreline, dispersing it with chemicals, or allowing it to degrade in the environment by natural weathering processes. These controlled releases give us the opportunity to determine the most effective countermeasure techniques."

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Canada Adopts World Conservation Strategy

The recent move by the federal government to endorse the World Conservation Strategy for application in Canada clearly recognizes the key role wise management of natural resources will play in defining the future of Canada.

Making the announcement last October, Environment Canada Minister John Roberts stressed the environmental, economic and social relevance of this important strategy paper to the Canadian situation.

"I am very happy to adopt this important document as a model for the development of federal government conservation strategies," he commented. "I see it as an important step towards ensuring environmental quality and continuing growth and prosperity of our resource-based economy."

Prepared to respond to long-range forecasts that project serious resource shortages and environmental degradation on a world scale, the World Conservation Strategy suggests ways to improve or maintain environmental quality, and points the way to sustainable economic and social development based on the wise use of renewable resources.

"Its compatibility with current economic thinking in this country makes it particularly applicable to Canada," said Mr. Roberts. "Our nation is rich in resources, particularly renewable ones, and we are dependent on these for our future development and prosperity. We will therefore need to manage them wisely."

The world strategy has three major objectives:

- To maintain essential ecological processes and life-support systems on which human survival depends. These include

soil regeneration and protection, the recycling of nutrients and the cleansing of waters.

- To preserve genetic diversity. This is the basis of essential processes and life-support systems as well as of breeding programs necessary for protecting and improving cultivated plants, domesticated animals and microorganisms, many scientific and medical advances, technical innovation, and the continuation of industries, such as agriculture, forestry and fisheries, which depend on living resources.
- To ensure the sustainable utilization of species and ecosystems such as fish and other wildlife, forests and agricultural lands which support millions of rural communities as well as major industries.

The World Conservation Strategy was produced by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) in cooperation with the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF). It was developed over a three-year period with the involvement of more than 450 government agencies, international bodies, non-government organizations and the participation of over 700 scientists from 100 countries. It was released throughout the world in March 1980.

Brazil, India and Australia are among many nations that have already endorsed this strategy or taken steps to implement it. The World Bank has also committed itself to support the implementation of this strategy.

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New Publications

Guide for Energy Reporters

A new edition of Contact: Energy, a guide to energy specialists in Canada and the United States, will help reporters on both sides of the border. It is published by the World Environment Center in New York, with funding from Environment Canada and the U.S. National Science Foundation.

The guide profiles more than 1200 Canadian and American specialists who have agreed--as a public service--to answer telephone queries from reporters and editors. The first edition, published in 1979, has been used by over 2000 newspapers, radio and television newsrooms.

Contact: Energy is available to the news media at \$14 American, including postage. Regular price is \$49.50 American. Information: Whitman Bassow (212) 697-3232

water ... our element

A leaflet describing the National Hydrology Research Institute (NHRI) of the Inland Waters Directorate and the work carried out by the employees of its three divisions: the Snow and Ice Division, the Surface Water Division and the Groundwater Division.

As part of its research program the institute tries to find out whether groundwater helps to reduce the effects of acid rain on lakes and streams. Another project seeks to answer the question whether contaminated groundwater resulting from the disposal of radioactive materials deposited in deep-lying rocks of the Canadian Shield will return to the surface.

Canada has over 100 000 glaciers which, incidentally, contain more water than the Great Lakes. By examining ice core samples from the glaciers researchers

can obtain information about past climatic conditions to aid the understanding of future potential climatic change.

Another aspect explored by NHRI is whether ice jam and glacier studies and estimates of water stored in soil, lakes, swamps and the snowpack can help in flood forecasting. Also being studied is permafrost and how it is affected by pipeline or highway construction and by northern mining.

The leaflet provides a brief outline of the institute's work and a summary of its major activities.

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Surveying Canada's Water

A leaflet about the Water Survey of Canada and its work. This organization, established by the federal government in 1908, keeps track of the amount of surface water available in Canada by measuring the volume of flow in our rivers and recording the levels of lakes and rivers.

The Water Survey of Canada collects data at more than 2 700 gauging locations across the country. Methods of measurement must be adaptable to conditions and call for various approaches ranging from wading a stream or using a rowboat to dangling from a cableway across a fast-flowing river.

Once the data are collected, they are collated, analyzed and computer-processed for publication or computer storage and retrieval. Data are made available to a wide variety of users both within and outside government.

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Francophone recruitment program

Within the next five years Environment Canada will create 250 new jobs, at a rate of 50 per year, for francophone scientists and professionals. This will raise the proportion of francophones in these categories to 20 percent from the 12.8 percent recorded in September 1981. In 1975 the proportion was 6.6 percent.

Environment Canada's deputy minister, J. Blair Seaborn, announced the recruitment program during a meeting in Montreal attended by representatives of Quebec professional associations, university placement officers, senior officials of Environment Canada, the federal Treasury Board and the Public Service Commission.

"Given the importance of this job category within Environment Canada, we feel that progress is too slow," said Mr. Seaborn, "and we have decided to invest more resources and more energy into it." He hoped professional associations and francophone university placement agencies

would provide information that would help achieve the program's objectives.

Said Patrice Dionne, director general of the department's Quebec region: "It is vital that we recruit francophone scientists who are as good as our anglophone scientists."

Environment Canada has had difficulty holding onto newly hired young professionals. This has been attributed partly to salary problems, but mainly to problems of integration into the working environment. Young francophone professionals are often isolated within a region or service of the department, in a strictly anglophone environment with which they are unfamiliar. Some 2 000 of Environment Canada's 11 000 employees are scientists and professionals, only 291 (12.8 percent) of whom are francophones.

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Day-Care Centre – Innovative Experiment For AES

The Atmospheric Environment Service, long noted for its experiments in the physical sciences, has gone out on a limb and become involved in a social sciences project. In the summer of 1982, it will open one of the federal government's first on-site day-care centres.

When Environment Minister John Roberts announced the plan in June, he said the Treasury Board had approved four one-year pilot projects.

AES climatologist Joan Masterton, a member of the Equal Opportunities for Women (EOW) coordinating committee and one of the principal organizers of

the experiment, said the project will call for creation of facilities for about 40 children, aged three months to five years. After alterations to the building in Downsview, metropolitan Toronto, 170 square metres of inside space and 220 square metres of outside space will be made available for the project. She added that the day-care centre has now been set up as a legal, non-profit corporation by parents who would be responsible for hiring the professional staff and that negotiations with federal, provincial and municipal authorities to obtain needed permits and zoning bylaw changes, are now in progress.

Mrs. Masterton explained that the decision to proceed with the AES day-care centre plan was made about a year ago after two staff surveys had indicated a definite need for this kind of facility. "As far as EOW was concerned, it seemed an excellent way of overcoming barriers to employment and promotion of women within the service," she said.

Acting on the results of the surveys, the Atmospheric Environment Service Management Committee granted approval in principle last June and started searching for suitable sites around the premises.

After many months of planning and discussion, design layouts and blueprints will soon be

finished, hiring procedures will be worked out, and fees structures drawn up. Fund raising activities are now being planned.

Although the AES initiative was one of four federal day-care applications, Mrs. Masterton thought it stood a good chance of being first off the ground and could well serve as the model for all similar government experiments.

Further Information:

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New Mobile Testing Laboratory

A new Environment Canada mobile automobile emissions and fuel consumption testing laboratory has been inaugurated in October in Hull, Québec.

The facility was in operation testing cars during Environment Week. The tests provided data on the emission of nitrogen oxides (NO_x) needed to determine the contribution of automobile emissions to the problem of acid rain.

The mobile facility will enable the department to test cars across Canada. This could be done previously only at Environment Canada's stationary laboratory in Ottawa.

The facility consists of a chassis dynamometer and sampling and analytical systems. The dynamometer can be adjusted to simulate the weight and wind resistance of the vehicle being tested, and enables a test technician to "drive" the car over a simulated urban and highway course. While the car is being driven on the dynamometer, the exhaust is

connected to the sampling system.

At the end of a specific collection period, the exhaust is pumped through the analytical system. This system measures the concentrations of hydrocarbons, carbon monoxide, NO_x and carbon dioxide in the sample collected. Thus the emission rate, in grams per mile, can be calculated for each pollutant. These rates, along with the knowledge of the carbon/hydrogen ratio in the gasoline, can then be used to calculate the fuel consumption over the specific driving cycles.

The test procedure includes a short tune-up, and the driver is advised how to maintain the car for minimum fuel consumption and pollution.

The mobile facility will travel across Canada in the next few years to gather data on the emissions and fuel consumption of Canadian vehicles.

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Consultation Policy Announced

The theme of this year's Canadian Environment Week was "Join the Environment Team." So it was particularly fitting that Environment Canada's Public Consultation and Information Availability Policy was officially announced October 16.

The policy breaks new ground because it formally guarantees what formerly depended upon goodwill. The Public Consultation Policy ensures regular and systematic communication between the officials of Environment Canada and the public. All interested persons and groups can now count on regular and predictable channels of access to the department.

For some time now, Environment Canada has been aware that, to tackle the complex environmental problems facing us, the department must have the broadest information base possible. The department has many publics, each of which has views and concerns, each of which needs to be heard if policies are to be developed fairly and wisely.

"The timeliness of this policy undoubtedly gives us an advantage not enjoyed by other countries facing similar

environmental problems," said Environment Minister John Roberts. "However, when I consider the challenges ahead, I feel that we have acted not a minute too soon.

"The department is aware that some groups may be hampered from taking part in consultation as fully as they would like because of financial restraints. The policy does contain provisions for travel expenses in certain cases.

"The formalized consultation process ensured by the policy will be under way shortly. Watch for announcements in your local area.

"The first years of operation of the Policy will be a learning process for us all. We will find that we will all need to evolve and refine our communication techniques, and we will all want to adjust the policy itself as experience dictates. Of course it will remain open for improvements as the need arises."

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Stewardship Awards CEW 1981

Environment Minister John Roberts presented the 1981 Marguerite and Vernon Heaslip Awards for Environmental Stewardship in Fredericton on October 16, on behalf of the National Survival Institute. At a dinner celebrating Canadian Environment Week, each winner received a framed print from the new exclusive collection by photographer Freeman Patterson.

1981 awards winners:

BUSINESS - Tom Beck, Calgary, for his work as environment coordinator and manager of environmental programs for Aquitaine Canada Ltd. Mr. Beck is now with PetroCanada.
ENVIRONMENTAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL GROUP - Canadian Coalition on Acid Rain, Toronto, and Washington, D.C.

EDUCATION - Mary Majka, Fredericton, in recognition of two decades of work in environmental education.

GOVERNMENT - Evelyn Gigantes, former Ontario M.P.P. for Carleton East (NDP), for her championing of environmental issues during her tenure, 1975-1981.

INDIVIDUAL - John Olthuis, Toronto, for his work in moving

Canada towards a more environmentally aware style of life and use of resources.

LABOR - Ivan Hillier, Sarnia, Ont., president of Local 672 of the Energy and Chemical Workers Union, for his 20 years of pursuing the issue of mercury dumping in the St. Clair River.

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Update Briefs

Evidence linking power-plant emissions with acid rain is "overwhelming", according to a report issued by the National Academy of Sciences in Washington. Prepared by the academy's National Research Council, the report predicts the number of affected lakes in Europe and North America will more than double by 1990.

Governors in the New England states have joined Canadians in pressing for action against acid rain. They promised a strong lobby in Washington, spurred by a warning from the United States Wildlife Service that New England's lakes are especially vulnerable to this kind of pollution.

Eighty percent of Americans oppose relaxation of existing federal regulations concerning air pollution, a congressional subcommittee has been told. Louis Harris said a September poll by his organization revealed that "not a single major segment of the public wants the environmental laws made less strict." Moreover, a clear majority opposed any postponement of current deadlines for meeting power-plant pollution standards.

Many private citizens and groups have helped to shape Environment Canada's new Public Consultation Policy. An official "response document," soon to be released, will summarize and respond to all comments received, and indicate their influence in forming the policy.

Environmentalists are awaiting the results of a new poll by CROP Inc., Montreal, on public awareness of Canada's acid rain problem. An earlier poll, reported last January, found that 6 percent of Canadians followed the issued "very closely" and another 32 percent "somewhat closely." However, 69 percent agreed it was our most important environmental problem.

Swedish and Canadian scientists are agreed that further research on acid rain is no substitute for action to control it. This was one conclusion of an "information exchange" between visiting Swedish researchers and Environment Canada experts, who called for closer cooperation between their two countries in dealing with this problem. The Canadians accepted an invitation to attend a conference in Stockholm next year on acid rain and forests.

