

of Learning, an agency to promote Commonwealth co-operation in distance education, with headquarters in Vancouver.

21.3.2 Canada and "la Francophonie"

Unlike the Commonwealth, "la Francophonie" is not an institutional grouping of countries. The term encompasses a community of countries sharing in various measures the French language and culture, an assembly of heads of state and government, intergovernmental institutions and private organizations.

The federal government represents Canada in these forums, and special participating government status is enjoyed by the provinces of Quebec and New Brunswick within the Agency for Cultural and Technical Co-operation, the main international francophone organization. With the provinces, Canada also participates in two major francophone ministerial conferences, the conference of ministers of youth and sports, and the conference of ministers of education. Quebec and New Brunswick are also represented by their Premiers at the meetings of heads of state and government, using French as a common language. The first such meeting took place in Paris in February 1986, and the second was held in Quebec, in September 1987. Within the context of "la Francophonie", various non-governmental professional associations work toward forming closer relations among their members and furthering the interests of francophone countries, especially in the Third World. The first two summits of heads of state and government of countries using French as a common language gave the international francophone community a real instrument of co-operation and interchange in the political, economic and co-operative fields. In this manner "la Francophonie", like the Commonwealth, is becoming a rallying point around which solutions to the major international problems may be sought. It provides Canada with an excellent framework for co-operation and dialogue with the industrialized countries, and with some of the poorest among the developing countries.

Belonging to "la Francophonie" is an excellent means of promoting the French fact in Canada by giving it an international dimension, and of strengthening Canadian unity by way of involving those provinces which have recognized French as an official language with the federal government.

21.3.3 Canada and the Economic Summits

The Economic Summit meetings of the leaders of the seven major industrialized democracies and

the European Community have been held annually since 1975 (Canada and the European Community began their participation in 1976 and 1977, respectively). The Economic Summit has no permanent home or secretariat. Summit sites and organizational responsibilities are rotated among the member nations.

The original concept was to have leaders discuss economic subjects outside the usual institutional framework. Fostering personal contact among leaders to bring about progress on the issues facing the world has remained an important objective of Economic Summits. Summits have brought key leaders together in a group that is powerful enough to have an important bearing on significant developments, both economic and political, in the world, yet small enough to make open and direct discussions possible.

These yearly meetings are the most visible elements of a broader, complex process of international consultation and co-operation in the management of the world economy. The Summits are closely linked to work done in other international forums including the International Monetary Fund/International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IMF/IBRD), the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the Group of Seven Finance Ministers. The continuing objective of Summits has been to work toward compatible macroeconomic policies to foster balanced non-inflationary global growth. All Economic Summits have emphasized the interrelationship of world problems. Economic growth, employment, inflation, energy, debt and the maintenance of a liberal trading environment are all facets of an interdependent world economy. Summits recognize the close connection between the prosperity of the industrialized countries and that of the developing world.

21.3.4 Canada and the OECD

The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) was established in Paris in September 1961. It succeeded the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) founded in 1948 by the countries of Western Europe to facilitate reconstruction of their war-shattered economies and to administer the Marshall Plan. In the OECD, Canada and the United States and later Japan, Australia and New Zealand joined with countries of Western Europe to form a major intergovernmental forum for consultation and co-operation among the industrialized nations.