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THE I.U.C.N. MEETING IN CANADA IN SEPTEMBER 1972: A personal account and a critique.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (which has its headquarters at 1110 Morges, Switzerland) held its 11th General Assembly and 12th Technical Meeting in Banff National Park, September 9-16, 1972, at the invitation of the Canadian Government. Canada became a Member State of I.U.C.N. at the 10th General Assembly in India in 1969. I.U.C.N. is the senior international nature conservation organization, and the week at Banff marked the first time that it had been able to meet in North America because the U.S.A. is still not a Member State.

The Banff meetings were held in the mis-named "Banff Centre", formerly the Banff School of Fine Arts. (Many overseas visitors were unable to understand what or where the "Banff Centre" was.) Federal government translators provided a simultaneous translation service, frequently used because a majority of the African delegates were French-speaking. The National Parks Service provided efficient uniformed staff assistance.

For me personally, the meeting was far and away the most valuable one that I have yet attended (in spite of criticisms I will mention later), and I was grateful for the opportunity to meet so many internationally-respected figures. I attended, not as a voting delegate, but as a "Friend of I.U.C.N." There are too few "Friends of I.U.C.N." in Canada, I feel.

Delegates from 52 countries were present, and the work of the General Assembly was their justification for travelling so far from home at such great expense. But, for most Canadians present (there were 85), I suspect that the scientific content of the Technical Meeting (3½ days) was their primary reason for coming. I had this notion myself beforehand, but I soon concluded that the General Assembly was more important. The theme of the Technical Meeting was "Conservation for Development", and there were six subthemes that ranged from environmental quality and policies through ecological multi-disciplinary planning, resource conservation and land management to vanishing species and habitat conservation. But the Technical Meeting differed little from any other scientific meeting on conservation and the spoken summaries of the papers were couched frequently in generalities, moreso than would have been the case at a national or regional meeting. And, few of us are sensitive to visions of truth shorn of living examples. The time allowed for discussing the papers was distressingly inadequate, and this prompted many adverse comments during the coffee breaks. In retrospect, the Technical Meeting seemed somewhat irrelevant because it did not lead directly either to new thinking or to action, although one or two delegates (notably an economist from India) valiantly tried to introduce some excitement.

Early in the week a schedule of lunch-time and late-afternoon workshop sessions on particular current concerns was spontaneously generated, and these attracted large attendances. For many delegates, these were more productive because they involved discussion of new ideas and because they allowed non-voting delegates to feel that they had a contribution to make. Several substantial resolutions which were later presented to the General Assembly originated in these workshops. (I attended one workshop on the conservation of tropical rain forests, in which I had become interested after visiting south-east Asia. A paragraph I had drafted at the workshop was presented by the Resolutions Committee to the General Assembly during debate on a much longer resolution concerning rain forests.) It is clear that the Executive Board of the I.U.C.N. should make room at the next meetings (in Zaire in 1975) for longer workshop sessions.

The General Assembly met in four sessions. The first two were devoted to keynote addresses and such business as the ratification of new member organizations, finance, and amendments to the rules. At the Banff meeting, only the four following Canadian non-governmental organizations were represented in a voting capacity: the Canadian Nature Federation, the National and Provincial Parks Association, the Conservation Council of Ontario, and La société zoologique de Québec. During the final two sessions of the General Assembly, on September 15 and 16, some 23 resolutions were debated and elections took place.

The composition of the I.U.C.N. is unique among international organizations in that voting delegates are divided into four groups (a Member State, a Government Agency or Institution, a Non-Governmental Organization from any state, or an International Non-Governmental Organization). To be passed or adopted, each matter of business or resolution is voted upon separately by each group and must be carried by both Government and Non-Government voters. This ensures that resolutions favoured by the former but not by the latter do not become I.U.C.N. policy and vice versa. Hence, resolutions that are adopted carry a considerable punch.

Among the 23 resolutions that were considered by the 11th General Assembly of the I.U.C.N., the more important were ones (i) urging governments to require ecological evaluation of development projects before they are accepted; (ii) urging governments to assess the adverse ecological effects of tourism; (iii) on the importance of ecological considerations in setting the boundaries of parks and reserves; (iv) urging the governments of Canada and the U.S.A. to complete establishment of the Arctic International Wildlife Range; (v) on controlling the international trade in wildlife; (vi) urging greater efforts to conserve marine mammals, including full international control; (vii) on the adherence of governments to the drafted Convention on the Conservation of the World Heritage; (viii) on moratoria to be negotiated with industry and research establishments for the protection of threatened species, including primates; and (ix) on ecological damage arising from oil and mineral exploration in the Mediterranean.

It says something about the state of the Conservation Movement in Canada today, I think, that the opportunity was lost by Canadians to introduce resolutions on certain major questions that concern us at

the present time (the West Coast tanker route, James Bay and other water diversion projects, etc.). I.U.C.N. resolutions about these issues would have been very helpful, but no one, apparently, submitted them (at least in a convincing form) to the Resolutions Committee. Along with its responses to other resolutions, we should expect the Government of Canada to take action on most of the resolutions mentioned above. (On the Convention on Conservation of the World Heritage and the International Convention on Trade in Threatened Species of Wildlife, it has already done so.) It will be a duty of the Canadian Nature Federation and other groups to put pressure on our governments to act on the I.U.C.N. resolutions.

A new president of the I.U.C.N. was elected, one who was widely welcomed. He is Prof. D.J. Kuenen, General Director of the Research Institute for Nature Management at Arnhem in the Netherlands. The past president was an American; at this juncture in the I.U.C.N. affairs, it was certainly wise that a respected European environmental scientist, able to visit Morges frequently, should have been chosen, for the next three years are going to be difficult ones. For the same period, Canada will be represented in the councils of the I.U.C.N. by Dr. Ian McTaggart Cowan, who was re-elected a vice president, and by Mr. John I. Nicol of the Canadian National Parks Service, who was elected chairman of the International Commission on National Parks, succeeding J.P. Harroy of Belgium. It is, presumably, a recognition of the international significance of our parks that a Canadian should have been selected to head this International Commission at a time when national parks are being severely threatened in more than a few countries due to damaging over-use by "Recreational Man" and encroaching civilization. Member organizations of the I.U.C.N. will expect leadership from Mr. Nicol. Canadians may expect the first benefits of the new guidelines he will have to develop to be applied in his own national laboratory. One hopes that Mr. Nicol will have realized that the concept of national parks as global nature reserves is rather different from the frequently-found view in industrialized countries that they should be playgrounds for people. It is no accident that several of the resolutions passed by the 11th General Assembly of the I.U.C.N. are very much connected with Mr. Nicol's new responsibility (those numbered (i), (ii), (iii), and (vii) above).

The most essential document presented to delegates at Banff was the Report on the work of the Union since the 10th General Assembly, which includes statements on actions that have resulted from the 34 resolutions passed at New Delhi in 1969. Also of great interest were the 1970-72 reports of the six I.U.C.N. Commissions: on Ecology; Environmental Planning; Environmental Policy, Law and Administration; National Parks; Survival Service; and Education. A document that may be helpful to many is entitled: Services available from the I.U.C.N. to its Members.

I said earlier that this was a profitable meeting in more ways than one. Nevertheless, if criticisms were heard they should be reported, so that they can be avoided in the future. The Government of Canada certainly made an error (though it was warned in advance) in holding the I.U.C.N. meetings in Banff National Park. Although Labour Day was past, even the cheapest class of motel accommodation could only be obtained at outrageous rates, even in the view of Canadians. Thus delegates from less affluent countries who were not officially representing their governments may have spent small fortunes at Banff because of Canadian

thoughtlessness. Also, something seems to have gone wrong with the elaborately-planned pre-Assembly and post-Assembly tours; all were cancelled "because too few persons...booked tours". I suspect that they were too expensive!

Just how nominations for posts on the I.U.C.N. Commissions are drawn up was not made clear. I heard more than a little criticism, directed rightly or wrongly at the I.U.C.N. Secretariat, and as much from visitors as from Canadians, concerning the methods by which the extensive slate of nominations for elections at the 1972 General Assembly had been prepared. It would appear that internal procedures should be changed before the next General Assembly, so that far wider prior consultations on the qualifications of nominees put forward by the Secretariat or by individuals will be assured, and so that the I.U.C.N. membership can participate in matters being considered by the Nominations Committee of the Executive Board. As it was, what could have become an ugly and embarrassing challenge from the floor of the Assembly was only barely avoided in 1972.

Lastly, I was profoundly disturbed by the documents entitled: Accounts of the Union for 1969, 1970, and 1971 and Report of Committee on Programme and Budget for 1973-1975. Since 1970, a Ford Foundation grant has been used primarily to increase the staff at Morges, apparently at United Nations pay rates, but this Ford Foundation grant ends this year. Salaries of the still small staff at Morges had used up about 70% of the I.U.C.N.'s resources; thus, in both 1970 and 1971, the I.U.C.N. Secretariat salaries actually equalled in amount the combined total of the grants received from the Ford Foundation and the World Wildlife Fund. Looked at another way, the floor salaries of the two most senior staff grades (D-2 and D-1) total \$57,000 (U.S.) per year, and, if there was one person in each grade, this equalled (in 1970) the whole of the subscriptions received from member organizations. At Banff, the General Assembly approved an increase in membership subscriptions without serious question. I am not arguing that this was not necessary, but I seriously question the I.U.C.N. Executive Board's spending of Ford Foundation funds solely for salaries (a non-capital expenditure). Must the I.U.C.N. (which is not a United Nations body) really pay UN salary scales? The new Executive Board must surely find ways of substantially increasing the percentage of the I.U.C.N.'s income that is devoted to active nature conservation.

The Canadian Nature Federation became a member organization of the I.U.C.N. only at the Banff meeting, and inexperience can be blamed for the fact that not only we, but also the other Canadian non-governmental groups were not able to take full advantage of the occasion (e.g. to present resolutions on Canadian environmental problems). But the Banff meeting was a very valuable one for Canada in many ways nevertheless. Canadians need the I.U.C.N., and the I.U.C.N. needs Canadian "Friends", without whom progress in conservation in this hemisphere cannot be in top gear.

What I have written in this report does not represent the official views of the CNF, nor even of my committee, but it is meant to interest, to inform, and to be constructive.

M. Timothy Myres, chairman
International Liaison Committee

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