

Ninth Session
New York, 17-27 February 1981
Agenda Item No. 6

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA AND CANADA DIVISION

(Prepared by Alan Rayburn)

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and Canada Division

Submitted by Alan Rayburn

At the Eighth Session in New York it was decided that the chairmanship of the United States of America and Canada Division should alternate for two-year periods between the heads of the delegations from the two countries comprising the division. For the period 1979 to 1981 Alan Rayburn has served as chairman. For the period 1981 to 1982 the chairman will once more be Richard Randall.

During the period since the Eighth Session Richard Randall, Executive Secretary of the US Board on Geographic Names and Alan Rayburn, Executive Secretary of the Canadian Permanent Committee on Geographical Names conferred on several occasions by telephone on a number of issues relating to undersea feature names, to policies and procedures for the handling of names outside the jurisdiction of either Canada or the United States, and to various questions of concern to the UN Group of Experts. No formal work or meetings were held as a division.

Discussions have been held on the topic of UNGEGN programs, based on a paper presented by the United States at the Eighth Session. While no specific divisional position was developed, it was generally agreed that a review of UNGEGN activities was necessary in order to reorient its focus and clarify its objectives for the sake of improving program efficiency and effectiveness.

In October 1980 Alan Rayburn participated in a regional conference in Salt Lake City where, among other topics discussed, he explained the relationships and procedures among the federal and provincial naming authorities in Canada. Another subject discussed was the treatment of geographic names of native origin in both Canada and the

United States. This latter subject was also raised at another meeting in Saranac Lake, New York in September 1980. Panelists at that meeting were Donald Orth, Executive Secretary of the Domestic Names Committee of the US Geographic Board, Jean Poirier, assistant to the chairman of the Commission de toponymie du Québec and Alan Rayburn.

Another indication of cooperation between Canada and the United States in the sphere of geographic names was the keen interest and participation shown by toponymic specialists from both countries in the successful symposium on the automation of geographical names held in Ottawa in June, 1980. William Opalski gave a paper on the efforts of the US Defense Mapping Agency to develop an automated names program in support of the USBGN work on foreign names. Donald Orth described a program of the US Geological Survey, in cooperation with the USBGN, to produce a series of state gazetteers using automated methods, and he also served on a panel discussion relating to automated toponymic data bases. Several Canadian toponymic and computer specialists also participated in the panel, and Rolf Böhme, the convenor of the UN Working Group on ADP, offered many significant remarks during the symposium.

The USBGN and the CPCGN will continue to maintain a close and cooperative relationship on all toponymic matters affecting our two countries.