

EDITORIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Since its creation in 1969, the International Council of Environmental Law (ICEL) has sought in numerous ways to fulfil its function of developing the exchange of information on legal, administrative and policy aspects of environmental conservation. One means of such communication which has been considered is the publication of an environmental journal. Opinions have differed, however, as to the need for such a journal and what it should be like.

As the product of much thought and preliminary work, the format chosen is not quite that of a journal, nor that of a magazine, but something of a compromise between the two. We mean to be read, and we mean to be useful, and we will do our best to keep our readers interested in the materials we present. Our purpose, though, is not to entertain, nor to inform those who would like to be "well-rounded". Rather, we see our audience as a special group of persons who are actively involved with problems of environmental law and policy. At the same time, we do not seek to create a scholarly journal, where experts speak to experts over their common expertise. Our central purpose is to report and analyze developments which should be of international interest — to inform those active in the environmental field in one country of the theories and practices being developed in other countries or at the international level. In short, we hope that ICEL's new journal will serve as a means of communication among decisionmakers around the world.

The environmental problems which face law and policy makers are sometimes of global impact and, even when on a more local scale, are often comparable from one country to another. For example, the industrialized countries must deal with similar problems of air pollution and rising energy consumption; developing countries confront crises in food production and depletion of natural resources; and vitually all nations are witnessing a more or less rapid urbanization process which is upsetting many features of the human and natural environment. The experience of one nation in seeking to manage such problems may offer valuable lessons to decisionmakers elsewhere. A comparison of the experience of several nations may reveal possibilities for cooperation to the benefit of all.

We see this journal as a contribution to the cause of environmental protection. Nonetheless, we do not intend to publish only material which appears to be "pro-environment". Perceptive attacks on environmentalist efforts and well-reasoned defenses of "anti-environmental" policies will find space in the ICEL journal. Those who would defend the environment might then be prepared to reply, and also to rethink their positions, if necessary.

Environmental Policy and Law is somewhat of an experiment, aimed to determine whether the sort of communicative effort envisioned will find acceptance and prove to be of value. The reaction of ICEL's members to the proposal to create a journal was largely supportive, and we have found ample materials we feel are worthy of publication. Now we come to another stage of the experiment, at which the journal will meet its audience. In this connection we will welcome your response, be it in the form of a subscription, a letter to the editor or submission of an article for publication — either in reply to something published here or on an independent subject. Your participation will be the life of this journal.

(We might have been forgiven deleting this section in our first issue, since readers would understand that, not having published before, we wouldn't yet have received the laudatory, complimentary, angry and outraged responses that normally fill a Letters to the Editor column. However, we have received many letters from ICEL members commenting on plans for this journal. Most, but not all, of these letters have been supportive and encouraging. We reprint a selection below, with the writers' initials. In future, letters will be printed only over the writer's name. It is hoped that this section will become an open forum for discussion of environmental issues.)

"I am delighted to hear that the Council intends to publish a journal of environmental affairs. . . . It is a tremendous undertaking, but because of the genuine need of it, and because of the Council membership's expertise in the field, the prognosis is good. . . ."

L.A.T.

"Je pense que l'expérience doit être tentée. Je pense aussi qu'elle doit avoir comme caractère principal, la vulgarisation de principes de droit, et l'inventaire de ce qui a été obtenu dans certains grands pays, grâce à l'application de cette nouvelle législation."

C.V.E.

"I was very interested to hear about the prospective journal of environmental affairs and will look forward to seeing it when it appears."

A.L.S.

"This project seems to me most interesting, especially if it is framed by certain principles. . . . I strongly believe that one of the most serious aspects of the environmental problem is the gap between thoughts and acts, between those who think and formulate policies and those who are the decisionmakers in each country. . . . The journal must be clear and frank with governments,

(continued on page 40)