

Financial problems

Within UNESCO we made known our disagreement, and we stressed our strongly-held conviction that politically-inspired resolutions would not produce the desired results and might well damage the effectiveness of the Organization. I considered, however, that our reaction should be measured and constructive and that we would not serve Canada's interests or those of UNESCO by taking more dramatic steps. There is no doubt in my mind that we took the proper course of action if all the valuable apolitical programs of UNESCO are not to be placed in jeopardy. As a responsible member of UNESCO, Canada continues to pay its assessed contributions on time in accordance with the Organization's financial regulations. It is regrettable that all members were not prompted to do so and as a consequence UNESCO is now facing severe financial problems.

The Director-General, Mr. M'Bow, asked member states for interest-free loans last fall. Canada could not accede to such a request until other avenues had been fully explored, including commercial loans, whereby all members of the Organization would have to contribute to solving UNESCO's financial problems in accordance with their ability to pay. In view of the circumstances, the Prime Minister advised the Secretary-General that he should examine other solutions as well as exercise budgetary restraint, and encourage all members to pay their contributions as early as possible.

Why Canada quit media meeting

This being said, some may wonder if the Canadian decision to cease participation in the expert meeting on mass media last December in Paris does not in fact indicate some toughening of the Canadian position towards UNESCO. I should answer to this that our decision in that instance was in no way directed against the Organization itself. As you know, the Government of Canada and the Canadian people generally have vigorously opposed in the United Nations General Assembly the adoption of the resolution equating Zionism with racism. When the UNESCO meeting of experts decided specifically to refer to that resolution

in its program of action and when our objections, and those of like-minded countries, were not heeded, we did not see any alternative to withdrawing from the meeting. This was done only after the seriousness of our objections, and indeed the objections of all Western countries, were clearly stated by the participants in the meeting. In similar circumstances, we would have adopted a similar attitude in any other technical meeting of any other UN agency. This should not prevent us from participating in the nineteenth General Conference next fall, although I must add that continued reference in UNESCO circles to the resolution on Zionism will undoubtedly discourage Canadian action in support of any programs that might be tainted by such a reference.

Security and Co-operation Conference

...The significance of UNESCO as an international organization is underscored by the role it is called upon to play in the implementation of a number of provisions of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. It is the Government's belief that this document, which was signed on August 1, 1975, by Prime Minister Trudeau and the heads of government of the United States and thirty-three states of Europe, has set the course for the general improvement of East-West relations for years to come. Calling on the participating states to reduce the barriers which exist among them to the movement of people, ideas and culture, it specifically cites UNESCO as an appropriate forum for working towards these objectives.

I am proud to be able to say that Canada played a significant role in the Conference. In so doing, we reinforced our commitment to European culture, where much of our heritage lies, and contributed to the political gains this document has achieved for Europe and for ourselves. I should mention, by way of parenthesis, that Canada is watching closely the results of the Conference....

As an established organization with a regional group devoted to European affairs, in which Canada intends to participate actively, UNESCO can make a lasting contribution to the promotion of understanding and confidence among governments and people. Each project it undertakes, each conference it spon-

sors, constitutes another step towards cementing the bonds of co-operation which the Helsinki Agreement sought to promote. People like you, who devote their time and efforts to making organizations such as UNESCO successful, give strength to the hope we all share for a better world....

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Looking to the future, we are now beginning our preparations for the nineteenth General Conference which is scheduled to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from October 25 to November 30 this year. I need not belabour the financial restraints under which we must operate, and which dictate a smaller, though not less efficient, Canadian delegation than is the case when the general conferences are held at headquarters in Paris. I am confident you will agree with such a decision.

In co-operation with other government agencies concerned as well as with the national commission, my Department will soon be immersed in the planning and budget documents in which UNESCO sets forth its short- and long-term program plans and financial needs and resources. I have no doubt that the Canadian views on these documents, which will be presented at the General Conference, will be valued by member states and the Secretariat, as they have been at past conferences.

I can assure you that against the background of our concern over UNESCO's financial problems, the Canadian delegation will scrutinize the budget carefully to ensure that proposed expenditures are related to program priorities and are solidly documented.

I am, as I am sure you are, proud of the fact that Canada is invariably among the first member states to meet its UNESCO assessments each year. It is equally a matter of pride that with your active and imaginative co-operation we back up our financial contribution with our whole-hearted participation in UNESCO activities....

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, Canada believes in the aims of UNESCO and the Government intends to make every effort to ensure that the Organization remains true to its original purpose. With your help, Canada can continue to make an important contribution and retain its reputation as an active and constructive member.