

Obviously a balance must be struck in the scale of priorities on both sides and naturally such a balance is in fact struck by the daily process of diplomatic activity. Canadian interests in Africa would hardly be enhanced if our Government were to allow our relationship with the United States, Japan or Europe to deteriorate. In a very real sense it is the very robust network of relations -- political, economic, technical and cultural -- that Canada has developed with other industrialized countries which gives us the means to cultivate a more substantial rapport with the emerging states of the world, in Africa as elsewhere. But I foresee nothing in the future which is likely to lessen the Canadian presence in Africa. On the contrary, all present indications are that we must continue to increase our activity in this field, subject of course to the resource constraints. In this respect, I would certainly expect a substantial contribution from you -- particularly on the more fundamental forces that will orient Africa's growing participation in world affairs. It is no secret that ominous gaps are developing in certain areas between the developing nations and the developed world. Within the Third World itself, the world energy crisis has made the relatively wealthy states better off and the poorer peoples even poorer.

You have heard complaints that the Third World is becoming monolithic, that it is ganging up on the West, that it is developing a blind automatic majority in international agencies. Africa is often singled out in these criticisms, as the numerous African countries are an essential component of any such majority. Well, this trend is quite understandable when we remember the history and back ground of the African countries. Perhaps we should not be surprised that they are using the most compelling argument they have, which is their voting strength in the United Nations and other bodies. Africa must be heard.

But, international organizations, in their present set-up, are not parliamentary bodies; they are rather a forum for discussing various world issues and reaching decisions on a consensus basis if possible. Confrontation between rigid blocs would be sterile and even dangerous. Canada does not wish to be automatically assigned to some theoretical bloc. We regard this approach as simplistic and even harmful. It is a precarious world we live in and to such common enemies of disease, poverty and ignorance we run the risk of adding bristling suspicion and distrust.

If we are to progress through this difficult period in world history we will require good will, common sense and much greater knowledge of each other. Ignorance, is highly dangerous in this volatile international environment. It is certainly true that knowledge does not always bring wisdom, but we should strive to create a climate in which that essential quality can be nurtured.