

## **"The Implementation of Principle Seven, dealing with Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms."**

October 31, 1977.

During the Geneva negotiations in which the text of the Final Act was worked out, it took 56 subcommittee meetings to complete the text of the Seventh Principle, dealing with human rights and fundamental freedoms. This is a measure of the sensitivity and importance of the subject, reflecting the fact that since the end of the Second World War human rights have been a major preoccupation in the United Nations and in other international forums. From these prolonged labours in Geneva emerged a substantial text which unequivocally enjoins all participating states to respect human rights and fundamental freedoms, and goes on to enumerate a number of specific aspects of human rights to be protected.

Much has already been said, during the Belgrade meeting and before it, about the need to recognize that the way in which a state deals with its citizens is purely an internal matter and that for others to comment upon it is to transgress the principles of sovereign equality and non-intervention in internal affairs. In discussing the First and the Sixth Principles, the Canadian delegation made it clear that we do not subscribe to this approach, and why we do not. Essentially, we believe that our shared commitments to the United Nations Charter and documents which deal with human rights, and our common adherence to the Final Act, have irrevocably placed human rights on the agenda of subjects of common international concern, and oblige each of us to respect those rights. And, Mr Chairman, to discuss them, as this seems necessary.

During our review of the principles so far, we have also heard a great deal about the emphasis which governments professing a Marxist philosophy place on economic and social rights. My delegation has no problem in acknowledging the importance of this aspect of the total complex of human rights. Nor do we hesitate to acknowledge, as was done by the Special Representative of my Foreign Minister in our opening statement in plenary, that some societies claim precedence for the rights of the collectivity over those of the individual. At the same time, it was made clear that, in the Canadian