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Before doing so, it is perhaps worthwhile noting that from its very inception the dispute over South West Africa has consisted of a complicated pattern of interwoven legal and political considerations. On the one hand there are advisory opinions and judgements of the International Court concerning the 1920 mandate and South Africa's international accountability under it, and on the other hand, numerous reports and resolutions of the United Nations, especially those relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms as derived from the Charter.

The opinions and judgements of the Court have clarified usefully a good number of points of international law. However the general disappointment and concern at the Court's recent decision not to judge the substance of the case against South Africa prompted the Prime Minister of Canada to make the following observations to a Montreal convention on August 9, 1966, of the American Bar Association:

"The Court's decision shows that the international legal system will have to evolve much farther if the rule of law in international conduct is to become the reliable instrument for regulating relations between states which it has become in governing conduct of individuals within states.