

Because of these convictions, we are particularly concerned that the role of the United Nations in the human rights field should be enhanced, and that recent proposals to this effect should be pursued. We support the appointment of a High Commissioner for Human Rights, as proposed by Costa Rica, and will join in co-sponsoring any resolution to this effect. Human rights are of universal significance; their violation must be of universal concern.

In speaking of human rights and freedoms and the general interest in peace and welfare, I am particularly aware of the parallel interests of the United Nations and of churches and other organizations. The institutions in which the religious and philosophical beliefs of mankind are embodied have much to contribute on the many issues we are debating.

Canada notes with the greatest satisfaction, therefore, the intention of His Holiness Pope Paul VI to visit the United Nations and to address the Assembly. He will be welcomed not only as the leader of his own church but as a man whose breadth of sympathy for those of other religious persuasions has been welcomed and reciprocated.

His decision to come can be understood in the context of the developments initiated by his illustrious predecessor, John XXIII, who, in his Encyclical "Pacem in Terris", expressed with perception and prophetic vision the inherent rights of man in his relations with human society and his longing for peace. His visit bears witness to his confidence in and support for the vital role which the United Nations is called upon to play in world affairs.

I have reviewed some of the major international issues with which, in our opinion, this Assembly must now concern itself -- and I do so, jubilant at the thought that procedural controversy does not stand in the way of our getting down to business. What we do about these issues, and how effectively we respond to the responsibilities and opportunities confronting us, depends on our ability and willingness to reach a consensus on policies and actions.

How do we bring this about? What is the most promising approach to decision-making in the General Assembly of the United Nations of 1965? There seem to be two possible answers to this question. One is for the members to think in terms of debating points, votes, and victories for the record. That path, in our opinion, leads to cynicism and sure frustration.

The other approach is for the United Nations to think in terms of undertakings and shared responsibilities -- to strive, in other words, to realize in their collective deliberations that same sense of achievement and responsibility which governments demonstrate in the conduct of their own domestic affairs. That way, in our opinion, lies promise and progress.

A key element in the search for effective consensus is the relationship between the great powers and the balance of the membership. It is a fact, of course, that the special status of the great powers is generally acknowledged. The Charter makes provision for this. But this recognition is accorded with the expectation that those who enjoy the capacity for effective action will accept its accompanying responsibilities; that they will persist in their continuing search for reasonable accommodations; and that the great powers will in turn