

More recently, the flow of letters in 1976-1977 about conditions in Chile encouraged the Canadian Government to consider authorizing 5,360 Chilean refugees to make their permanent homes in Canada, since, through normal diplomatic channels, representations against the violation of human rights in Chile were having no effect. Even in these cases, however, decisive action took place only after the Government decided that it was in Canada's interest, and within its capacity, to do so, for this is the ultimate decision-making mandate given to a responsible democratic government by the electorate.

Most written representations on broad policy areas are accompanied by representations from interest and pressure groups through the medium of meetings with the Minister and officials. The interest group is usually a legal, professionally or ideologically homogenous, entity with a variety of foreign-policy interests (such as a church, a union or a business group), while the pressure group is usually formed for a specific short-term purpose. Interest groups can usually make a formidable representation but may not carry their views if they become victims of their own fragmentation, as in the cases of the churches over the provision of assistance to Biafra and of the academics in their views on continued Canadian participation in NATO.

Brief existence

Pressure groups usually have a brief existence associated with a specific international event and can be most effective when they see their pet idea in the context of total Canadian policy and capability. For example, it was impossible to act upon pressure-group demands in the Sixties for official condemnation of the violation of human rights in South Vietnam and South Korea without also considering violations in North Vietnam and North Korea. Any protest against the violation of human rights that is to be credible at home and abroad must be universal, reflect a single standard, and not be selective according to the violator's political system or beliefs; otherwise it becomes a political rather than human-rights protest, involving a different set of evaluative criteria.

The interchange of ideas between the Department and major interest groups is almost continuous as the Minister and his officials often attend the national gatherings of such groups as speakers, panelists and observers when foreign-policy issues are on the agenda. In the past year, Departmental representatives have participated in over 100 meetings with such diverse groups as the Association of Cana-

dian Slavists, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Canadian Business and Industry International Advisory Committee, Rotary International and the Canadian Association of Young Political Leaders. In each of these dialogues, the organization has an opportunity to learn, discuss and present views on international issues of concern to Canada. When the Department does not have the opportunity to hear or read the views of certain attentive sections of the public, invitations have been extended for meetings in Ottawa. For example, ten academic experts on disarmament were recently invited to Ottawa to present their views on what Canadian policy should be at the forthcoming special disarmament conference of the United Nations.

Seminar

The receptivity of the Department to this kind of dialogue was illustrated by the Minister's attendance on March 16, 1977, at a human-rights seminar sponsored by the Canadian Council of Churches and the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops. For several years, certain religious denominations have been suggesting to the Government that economic, as opposed to food, aid be suspended to any state violating human rights. The question is a difficult one when it comes to deciding whether the benefits of a Canadian-financed irrigation scheme go more directly to the people or the government that refuses to protect the human rights of its citizens. After discussing the constraints and opportunities for action in such cases, the Minister concluded: "I have an open mind on this subject. I am prepared to consider possible courses of action available to us if I can be convinced that such action will prove effective." If the attentive public can demonstrate, as the bureaucrats themselves must do, that a specific Canadian action will be effective and appropriate in the existing international environment, the opportunity for influencing policy implementation does, in fact, exist. In addition, there has been a host of interest groups that have participated directly in policymaking and conference diplomacy through membership in the Canadian delegations to international conferences dealing with clusters of functional and economic issues.

Some interest groups have recently developed very effective means of mobilizing widespread public support for the purpose of making their views known to the Government. One of the best known of these organizations is GATT-Fly, an inter-church initiative for an alternative trade policy. GATT-Fly has made its presence felt at recent UNCTAD conferences through its consistent support of the position taken by