

This is an unfortunate development. On the other hand, we must realize that the impression that extraneous political discussion is on the increase has been magnified in the last few years by the suddenness and consistency with which the Western countries have found themselves in a minority position on many U.N. issues. And this is being widely, and sometimes dramatically, reported by the media.

This brings to mind the three decisions affecting Israel that were taken at the 18th General Conference of Unesco in 1974. One of those decisions as you will recall, referred to the question of the Israeli application for membership in the European group of Unesco. Israel was denied membership, notwithstanding Canadian support. It is deplorable that, due to overly dramatic press reporting, the impression was left that Israel had been expelled from Unesco, whereas that question, as you well know, was never raised.

The other two decisions concerned the adoption, after protracted debates, of two resolutions, one on Jerusalem and the other on the occupied territories. In the view of the Government, Unesco and the other specialized agencies were not created, and do not have the mandate, to discuss political issues. In the particular instance of the Middle East, it is clear that the broad political questions involved cannot be taken into account in an adequate manner by a body like Unesco whose competence is limited to educational, scientific and cultural affairs. It is for these reasons that the Government of Canada publicly deplores the frequency of political discussion at Unesco and the introduction of questions extraneous to the purpose for which it was established.

Within Unesco we made known our disagreement, and we stressed our strongly-held conviction that politically-inspired resolutions would not produce the desired results and might well damage the effectiveness of the organization. I considered, however, that our reaction should be measured and constructive and that we would not serve Canada's interests or those of Unesco by taking more dramatic steps. There is no doubt in my mind that we took the proper course of action if all the valuable apolitical programmes of Unesco are not to be placed in jeopardy. As a responsible member of Unesco, Canada continues to pay its assessed contributions on time in accordance with the organization's financial regulations. It is regrettable that all members were not prompted to do so and as a consequence Unesco is now facing severe financial problems.

The Director General, Mr. M'Bow, asked member states for interest-free loans last fall. Canada could not accede to such a request until other avenues had been fully explored, including commercial loans, whereby all members of the organization would have to contribute to solving Unesco's financial problems in accordance with their ability to pay. In view of the circumstances, the Prime Minister advised Mr. M'Bow that he should examine other solutions as well as exercise budgetary restraint, and encourage all members to pay their contributions as early as possible.