

It is also assuming responsibility for organizing a national human rights conference in the late autumn of next year.

Many Canadians retain a profound and active interest in the lives of their kinsmen in other lands. Where the fundamental human rights which we enjoy in Canada are denied in countries from which many of us or our forefathers came, it is natural that we should wish to see those rights more widely shared. And it is constantly debated how this can best be done. There may still be some who talk of "roll-back" or "liberation" by force -- who would be prepared in effect to risk the destruction of mankind in pursuit of a freedom which nobody would live to enjoy. But this is a discredited and futile approach, to which there remain few adherents.

Others, more realistically, favour the pressure of public opinion or international bodies and diplomatic contacts to persuade reluctant regimes to grant concessions. There are times and places when pressure of this sort can yield positive results. In practice, however, this approach requires careful timing and often lengthy preparation if it is not to be counter-productive. It is not a lever which can be used indiscriminately. Nor is its effectiveness increased by those whose main purpose is less to advance human rights than to embarrass regimes which they oppose. At best, this method will often be only a palliative, unlikely to lead to any permanent change of heart.

If we are to achieve more lasting results, we must be prepared to pursue an indirect policy. There is now a process of social evolution through which individual freedoms are being slowly extended in countries where ten years ago the prospect seemed bleak indeed. Canada has had an effect on this process by encouraging contacts which have helped to dissipate hostility. We have demonstrated that freedom is not a dangerous weapon and that, in offering to deal with the peoples of the world and whatever governments they may have, we are not conspiring to overthrow the established order in countries where freedom is still suspect. We cannot look for human rights under governments which feel themselves threatened. Nor, in the long run, can we induce such governments to extend the area of human rights against their will. What we can do is foster the will, and I believe that there is now ample evidence that such a policy can succeed.

The media of mass communication are important instruments in promoting knowledge and understanding of human rights issues, and the ethnic press in particular has a vital role to play in this respect. You have the task of encouraging your readers to preserve their cultural values, thus enriching our whole society.

As pointed out at a UNESCO Conference held some years ago, an important problem to which you might address yourselves is that of the different rates of cultural adjustment of the various age-groups in immigrant families as a factor in family tension. Here the ethnic press has a special part to play, for it enables parents to retain cultural contacts they hold dear, while increasing their appreciation of the Canadian environment.