

Role of the public

In Canada, we have perhaps only recently really recognized the vital role in this process of the public itself. It is not elite opinion, at round tables of experts, where we most need to work, but at the community level, in town halls, where the bulk of the population is centred. I accept this as a task of political leadership nationally. But it is one where success will be much more easily obtained if there are political understandings internationally.

Last week I attended a meeting in Vienna of foreign ministers who gathered to determine if North-South Summit meetings of political leaders of various countries can assist the political process I am speaking of — to see if such meetings could vitalize the global negotiating process. We concluded they could. Such a Summit meeting will be held early in June. As the idea for a North-South Summit in fact originated with the North-South Round Table, I congratulate you on its acceptance.

Late in the summer, the leaders of the principal industrialized countries will meet, here in Ottawa, with an agenda which will emphasize the role of their countries in the global power-sharing process.

In September, the Commonwealth heads of government will meet in Australia.

These meetings, and others, will give international political leadership the chances in 1981 to come to terms with the broad political sweep of North-South and global issues. It is our hope that they will permit political leaders to understand each other, and the nature of the challenge the future represents, in a way not available at international negotiating meetings of a more formal, conventional character. But a main purpose will be to encourage progress on the international agenda, and notably in the Global Negotiations themselves.

Issues that could be advanced

I feel that some longer-term questions in particular can be advanced.

On institutions, I think that the imperatives of power-sharing need a longer look at the political level. How can the interests of all countries be better served by the Specialized Agencies of the United Nations' system? What are the specific needs of both developed and the various kinds of developing countries? Can the specific needs of developing countries be better addressed by the older agencies without altering their essential useful functions? If not, how else can we address those needs?

On longer-term financing needs of developing countries, certainly one of the most critical basic problems, political leadership needs to acknowledge the need for structural adjustment financing for countries whose balance-of-payments deficits are becoming chronic, and of the role the surplus revenue countries can play in the easing of these difficulties through recycling. These are large issues — they are basic to world politics; their resolution is going to require political accommodation.

With regard to aid itself, the world community has really got to begin to face realities. The issue of automaticity of aid flows is going to have to begin to receive political scrutiny. There is no escaping the logic of this notion, at least multilaterally. As an idea, its time has come. It should begin to receive the sort of analysis of ways and