

parts of the globe. Our world has become so compact, so interdependent, that all humanity is wounded by an outbreak of violence in any corner of the earth. Whether it be in Vietnam, Nigeria, or the Middle East, suffering in any part of the world disturbs the whole international community and affects Canada as a responsible member of that community.

Although we must be aware of the effects of these upheavals on our own country, we are even more concerned about the damage inflicted on the prospects for world peace and the spread of misery and deprivation. The means at our disposal for bringing these conflicts to an end are necessarily limited, but the Government is making full use of its opportunities to help reduce international tension.

We will continue to be an active member of the United Nations. After a quarter of a century of radical changes in its functions and membership, the U.N. needs to be revitalised and strengthened. Canada is presenting its proposals for reform to the present session of the General Assembly.

As weapons become more destructive and weapons' testing more dangerous, the Government is assigning a higher priority to its efforts in the field of arms control. One barrier to a ban on underground nuclear tests has been the difficulty of verifying that it is being observed. As a practical step towards such a ban, Canada has proposed an international exchange of seismic information.

As long as differences between peoples are permitted to degenerate into hatred and violence, we cannot remain unmoved by appeals for help from the victims of wars. At the International Red Cross Conference last month, the Canadian Government gained acceptance of a principle which it has long supported whereby the Red Cross will be permitted to provide relief during civil wars to civilians on both sides.

In addition to our work in international organizations, we are intensifying our direct contacts with many of the governments and peoples of Latin America, Africa and Asia. At this session you will be asked to consider a bill to create a Canadian International Development Research Centre which will bring together Canadian and foreign experts on the problems of developing economies.

A disturbing element in many countries of the world has been the rising tide of unrest, particularly among young people. It has expressed itself in many ways, in public

debate, in peaceful protest and sometimes in violence. Our profound disapproval of the excesses must not blind us to deeply felt and legitimate aspirations. Many citizens in our own country believe that they are entitled to assume greater responsibility for the destiny of our society. Such demands, insofar as they do not conflict with the general welfare, are the expression of a truly democratic ideal. They must be satisfied if our society is to attain its goals of peace and justice.

The Government believes that the time has come to extend the franchise in federal elections and it will therefore recommend to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections of the House of Commons that the voting age be lowered to eighteen.

Changes will be proposed in the legislation governing the Northern Territories which will improve the representational character of their Councils.

If the rights and interests of individuals and groups are to be safeguarded, they must be accurately reflected in the political structure of this country and in its basic blueprint, the Constitution.

The Government therefore attaches the greatest importance to the revision of the Constitution and to the progress achieved by the Constitutional Conference. The last meeting of the Conference provided an opportunity for particularly productive discussions, and the Government is determined to spare no effort to ensure the success of this vital task.

History, geography and economics have placed certain of our citizens at a disadvantage. Under legislation enacted during the last session of Parliament, the Government is establishing programs to reduce these inequalities.

The Official Languages Act, which provides for the use of French and English in federal government institutions wherever the composition of the population justifies it, will permit the exercise of essential language rights within a society which recognizes and welcomes a rich diversity of race, religion and cultural traditions.

This resolve to achieve linguistic equality will have its counterpart in social and economic life. During the last session, Parliament enacted legislation which will enable the Government, with the co-operation of the provinces, to set up programs to reduce regional disparities in employment opportunities and average incomes. In fact, despite