

the Council of Ministers of Education. It seems to me essential that Canada's participation in a major international forum such as Unesco benefit as much as possible from the active input of those organizations and individuals within Canada who possess the necessary competence to make a positive contribution. I am therefore reassured and encouraged by the arrangements already in place with respect to the CMEC.

However, as we are all well aware, provincial government interest in the work of Unesco is not confined to the field of education. It is certainly my impression that the last few years have witnessed a significant rise in the level of interest shown by the provinces generally, and by three or four in particular, in an increasingly wide range of Unesco activities. Personally, I welcome this development, recognizing, however, as we all do, the additional pressures which it may eventually bring to bear on our administrative machinery in this period of restraint. Certainly, as far as my Department is concerned, we are prepared to do our part to facilitate the involvement of all provincial governments which consider that they are in a position either to contribute to, or benefit from, any aspect of Unesco's work and its purpose.

Over the years Canada has contributed solidly to Unesco programmes -- in science through the International Hydrological Decade, Man and Biosphere, and the International Oceanographic Commission -- in education through support to Unesco initiatives in curriculum revision, teacher training and the application of science to development -- in culture through comparative studies, and exchanges of ideas, people, museum and research specimens, books and publications. Canada has been active in efforts to clarify concepts and define good international practice in areas such as human rights, access to education, cultural co-operation and the free flow of publications.

Since the 18th General Conference of Unesco, observers and critics have increasingly referred to the "politicization" of that Organization. Political discussion is nothing new to the U.N. family of organizations. What is relatively new, however, is the proliferation and dominance in some cases of extraneous political discussion in the various specialized agencies of the United Nations. You are no doubt aware that, although the publicity given to Unesco decisions has singled out that organization more or less as a symbol of undue "politicization", other specialized agencies have also been hit by the introduction of extraneous political debate in their discussions. What is disturbing is that we now see the possibility of the type of political debate, normally associated with the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, threatening to absorb an inordinate amount of time and energy at technical meetings, and to undermine efforts to deal seriously with the substantive and technical issues these fora are expected to discuss.