

I do not know of a single country, or a single foreign minister, that does not profess support for justice, amity, co-operation and understanding among peoples. As we all know, wars are nearly always justified as a means of attaining at least one of these worthy objectives.

The truth of the matter is that, while nation states and their leaders may be perfectly sincere in their protestations of goodwill towards mankind in general, they do not have identical interests. Conflict of interest is of the essence of relations between states just as it is of the essence of relations between individuals and groups. That is the starting-point of any realistic approach to human affairs.

Canada does not have interests identical with those of the United States or with those of Britain or France, or of the Soviet Union. Our respective national interests come into conflict at many points and are bound to do so and, the closer the relations, the more the points of conflict. Thus it is inevitable that, as the world contracts by reason of improved communications and grows more populous, the conflicts of interest between states will become more numerous, but let us hope not more serious.

We see the same thing going on in relations between people within states as their populations grow. The closer people come into contact with one another the more they come into conflict. Cities are more turbulent than the countryside.

This is not intended to be a pessimistic forecast of rising international and internal strife. Not at all. Conflicts need not become matters of strife; indeed, the aim of all men of goodwill is to do everything possible to ensure that conflicts are resolved peacefully and amicably.

I make these general observations rather for the purpose of drawing attention to the nature of the problem of promoting justice, amity, co-operation and understanding amongst the peoples of the world. As I have said, it is not sufficient to favour these worthy objectives. Let us take it for granted that everyone is in favour in principle and move on to consider how to deal with the specific points on which there may not be such unanimous agreement.

To illustrate. The whole world is deeply shocked by the civil war in Nigeria. Canadians are foremost in their desire to see that tragic conflict brought to an end. What stands in the way? Certainly not any lack of support for the principles of justice, amity, co-operation and understanding. Our ears ring with eloquent and fervent pleas in the name of humanity. Both sides claim that theirs is a just cause.

What has stood in the way of a peaceful settlement has been a fundamental conflict of interest. Nigeria wants to maintain the integrity of the state. Biafran leaders have insisted on independence. Until that conflict is resolved the war will go on.