

prevailed at the seventh special session will have a favourable effect on the atmosphere at the Conference on International Economic Co-operation. We have, obviously, a vital interest ourselves to pursue at this conference. There will be four commissions, two of which are of primary concern to Canada -- the Commission on Raw Materials and the Commission on Energy -- and it probably will see these commissions, for a period of a year, discussing the whole question of raw materials, which is a big item in the context of the new international economic order, with probably, at the end of the year, some report to ministers.

That is really the next incident in this unfolding scene. We are now preparing for that meeting. We have not yet completed our preparations and we have not sought final approval of our positions from the Cabinet.

I want now to turn to some other general comments. Just as the Canadian International Development Board, under the chairmanship of Mr. Gérin-Lajoie, advises me on development-assistance matters, the Interdepartmental Committee on Economic Relations with Developing Countries, under the chairmanship of Mr. Robinson, advises me on the broader multidimensional issues that we are continuing to deal with. I wish to stress the interdepartmental nature of the Government's consideration of these issues. Thus, through our aid program and through other measures of co-operation with developing countries, we are seeking ways of lessening disparities between developed and developing countries.

In my view, bringing rich and poor closer together and finding ways to lessen these great disparities is one of the fundamental tasks in the field of international relations today. It is crucial for global stability and for the future of human civilization. I believe Canada has the ability to maintain and increase its efforts to confront these problems despite the sacrifices that will be required in our domestic fight against inflation.

Aid programs are easy targets in time of economic stress. Support for our programs must be founded on a broad understanding by Canadians of the critical problems facing the community of nations and of the disastrous results that would follow any reduction of effort by industrialized nations because of economic problems at home. The importance of broadly-based national support for our programs and policies aimed at assisting developing countries cannot be over-emphasized.

I understand that members of the subcommittee will be making an effort to ensure that Canadians are made more aware of the issues