

Canada's human rights obligation

If Canada wishes to have its views on human rights heard, it must ensure its credibility and must continue to improve respect for human rights in Canada, Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan told the Canadian Human Rights Foundation in Ottawa, March 27.

Canada must ensure that it lives up to the "letter and spirit" of its own international undertakings, said the minister. That is, if Canada is to address the subject of human rights in other countries it must be prepared to have them, in turn, address the state of human rights in Canada, he said.

The Canadian government has taken an important step in this direction, said Dr. MacGuigan, by ratifying the Optional Protocol to the United Nations Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which permits Canadians to challenge Canada's performance on human rights internationally. "We believe that any government which pretends to respect faithfully the provisions of the Covenant should be prepared to make a similar undertaking," he said.

Dr. MacGuigan told the Foundation that over the years Canada had responded "emphatically" to the persecution of individuals and groups. Since the Second World War the Canadian government has resettled in Canada more than 350,000 refugees and displaced persons of many origins: Eastern Europeans, Soviet Jews, Hungarians, Czechs, Tibetans, Ugandans, Asians, Argentinians, Lebanese, Chileans, Vietnamese, Kampuchean, Laotians, Cubans, Haitians and, most recently, Salvadorans.

Relief for victims

The philosophical foundation of Canada's human rights policy, said the minister, was identical to that of its refugee resettlement and development assistance programs — to bring relief to the victims and ensure their safety, security and basic human needs.

Dr. MacGuigan also emphasized that Canada did not sell arms to countries engaged in conflict or to countries whose human rights practices were "repugnant" to Canadian values, and especially where they might be used against the civilian population.

The minister said that in determining recipients of development aid the Can-

adian government takes into account broad human rights considerations. "Both the need of the country and the readiness for its government to deliver assistance to its neediest populations are important factors in determining eligibility for aid," he said.

Canada, however, must know the facts in a situation if it is to respond to a human rights problem, said Dr. MacGuigan. He said that the federal government received comments from Canadian and international non-governmental organizations and that annual consultations with these groups had begun.

Economic assistance for Poland

The Canadian government has agreed to permit Poland to defer about \$21 million in repayments of official credits due between March 15 and June 30.

This is a short-term measure to help alleviate Poland's immediate repayment burden. Canada is also participating in discussions between Poland and Western creditors to consider measures to deal with the problem of Poland's external indebtedness over the longer term.

Canada will continue to be a major source of grain for Poland under the provisions of a long-term agreement, covering the period 1980-82, for the supply and purchase of 1-1.5 million metric tons of grain annually. Under this agreement Canada will provide Poland with the credit guarantees required to finance these grain shipments.

Pledges to UN funds

Canada pledged \$495,000 to the United Nations funds for Southern Africans at a pledging conference at UN headquarters in New York on March 18, the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Pledges (subject to Parliamentary approval) were made to the United Nations Institute for Namibia in the amount of \$175,000 and to the United Nations Educational and Training Program for Southern Africa (UNETPSA) in the amount of \$300,000.

Canada is a long-standing supporter of these funds which operate educational programs for refugees from South Africa and Namibia. Scholarships are granted annually through the UN program.

Satellite marks ten years

Isis-2, the fourth and last scientific research satellite launched by Canada recently marked its tenth year in space. The satellite was originally built to last two years at most.

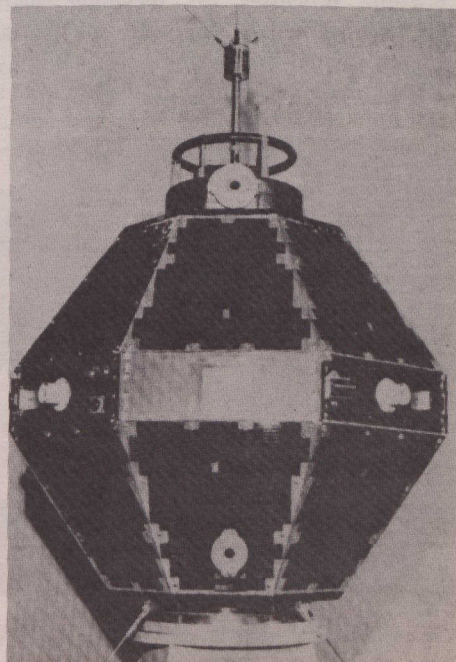
The other satellites in the series, launched between 1962 and 1971, were *Alouette-1* which lasted ten years, *Alouette-2* which lasted just under ten years and *Isis-1* which is 12 years old and still operating.

Communications department financing to keep *Isis-1* and *Isis-2* working and analyzing data stopped recently when users, mainly the Department of National Defence took over the annual cost of \$200,000.

The two satellites are expected to operate only one more year, unless the users want to pay for longer service, although the satellites have the potential to function longer.

Isis-2, the most sophisticated of the four, carries 12 experimental packages and produced the world's first scientific picture of the *aurora borealis* as seen from above.

The four satellites, all expected to last one to two years, were designed to investigate the ionosphere from above. The ionosphere is the area of the upper atmosphere which reflects radio waves.



Isis 2, the fourth and last scientific satellite Canada placed in orbit, is still functioning after ten years.