

Mr. Speaker, forty years ago, Canada endorsed the founding of UNESCO. Why? To Canadians, the objectives of UNESCO, then as now, were of prime importance: it was created for the purpose of contributing to peace and security by promoting collaboration among the nations, through the educational, scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare established of mankind for which the United Nations organization was established and which its Charter proclaims.

Mr. Speaker, the reason why I am addressing this House today is to reiterate on behalf of the Government of Canada our faith in UNESCO and our desire to remain in it, now that the 23rd General Conference has come and gone. UNESCO's role is a unique and valuable one.

Please allow me to summarize activities in its mandate.

In education it fights illiteracy, trains teachers and educational personnel and builds schools. It strives to promote equal educational opportunity for girls and women, the handicapped and the elderly, and to improve education in rural areas. This is a work of primary importance that coincides with the priorities of the Government.

In science, UNESCO fosters the development of science and technology throughout the world. It is a promoter of science, supporting thousands of projects not by carrying out the projects itself, but by helping others to do them.