

"Our Association, while finding no particular fault with the Preamble and Article 1 of the Draft Convention, views with apprehension the implications of the clauses set forth in Article 2. Any qualification of freedom such as those listed in this article could be quoted as justifying restrictive legislation by any State that chose to place its own interpretation under the cloak of the Convention.

"Further, there is no sound reason for this series of 'escape clauses'. In States where there are already laws covering the protection, expressions, obligations and preventions listed as desirable in Article 2, a Convention calling for observance of the general principle of freedom of information could not, unless so provided in the Covenant, be held to override such legislation. In other States (probably there is none) where such laws have been found to be unnecessary, this Article is a direct invitation to enact them without any limitation upon their scope or oppressive potentials. This is a grossly unsuitable feature of a Convention intended to encourage freedom of information.

"In view of the foregoing and in consideration of the fact that several of the other Articles are subject to similar criticism, we feel that the Canadian Government should oppose the adoption of the Convention."

The Answer which I have just quoted may seem to be a harsh judgment, but as I have said already, it represents the consensus of the people who are most directly interested in the matter: that is to say, the editors, the journalists, publicists, people of the radio, cinema, etc.

If my Government had entertained any doubts as to the liberality of the laws which govern the gathering and diffusion of information in my country, or as to the attitude it should take on the draft which is before us, such testimony was a clear deterrent to its approval. The position of my Government is that this draft convention is totally unsatisfactory.

Yesterday, the distinguished delegate of Mexico described the draft convention as a "common denominator between conflicting tendencies". Mr. Chairman, I cannot agree with this description. It is, in my view, no more than a working paper which might lead to a compromise between extremes. The discussions in the Geneva Conference, and especially in the ad hoc committee, have demonstrated that any compromise that could be reached would put the seal of international recognition on a set of principles which falls far short of the standard of freedom which is recognized in many countries, including mine. We believe it would constitute an invitation to governments to use the convention as a justification for imposing undue restrictions.

The distinguished delegate of France yesterday compared the convention to a building of which two wings have already been built and he considers the holding of the conference for the completion of the convention as the third and final wing of the building. I am rather tempted to compare it to a building which already has two storeys but, in my mind, the foundations of the two first storeys are so weak and shaky that the addition of a third floor would bring about the collapse of the whole building.

I would not like to take too much of the time of the