

INTRODUCTION:

- I AM GRATEFUL FOR OPPORTUNITY TO ASSIST YOU BY PROVIDING FACILITIES FOR MEETINGS AND TO HAVE BEEN INVITED TO SPEAK.
- I AM ESPECIALLY PLEASED BECAUSE THE SUBJECT OF THE SEMINAR, "HUMAN RIGHTS AND CHRISTIAN RESPONSIBILITY", PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME OF OUR CONCERNS ABOUT HUMAN RIGHTS AND, IN PARTICULAR, TO AIR THE OFTEN COMPLEX PROBLEMS CONFRONTING A GOVERNMENT ACTING TO PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS IN AN EFFECTIVE MANNER AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL.
- CANADA HAS ALREADY ESTABLISHED A REASONABLY GOOD RECORD IN INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS ORIENTED ACTIVITIES OVER THE YEARS.
- UNFORTUNATELY IT SEEMS THAT, IN THIS STRUGGLE, WHILE THERE HAVE INDEED BEEN DEVELOPMENTS WHICH ARE ENCOURAGING (NO MAJOR WARS FOR OVER 30 YEARS, A MEASUREABLE IMPROVEMENT IN INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS OF THE INTERDEPENDENCE OF THE WORLD COMMUNITY, A HEARTENING INCREASE IN DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE FLOWS FROM RICHER TO POORER NATIONS, AN APPARENT INCREASE IN THE ENJOYMENT OF PERSONAL LIBERTIES EVEN WITHIN THE RESTRICTIVE REGIMES OF EASTERN EUROPE), NEVERTHELESS THERE STILL EXIST, TOO MANY GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN MANY COUNTRIES, VIOLATIONS WHICH ARE NATURALLY A CAUSE OF CONCERN TO CANADIANS AND WHICH ALL OF US WOULD LIKE TO BE ABLE TO RECTIFY OR AT LEAST AMELIORATE IN ONE FASHION OR ANOTHER. HOW CANADA SHOULD REACT TO SUCH SITUATIONS, WHAT CONSIDERATIONS SHOULD GUIDE US, WHAT CONSTRAINTS AFFECT US WILL BE THE THEME OF MY TALK THIS EVENING.

CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL ACTION IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD:

- I WOULD LIKE TO STRESS AT THE OUTSET THAT THERE IS A FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE - WHICH IT SEEMS IS NOT ALWAYS READILY APPRECIATED - BETWEEN OUR DOMESTIC ACTIVITIES IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD AND THE ACTION THAT CANADA CAN TAKE INTERNATIONALLY.
- DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE DOMESTIC AND INTERNATIONAL SPHERES OF ACTION IS TWO-FOLD: THE FIRST IS THE PROBLEM OF STANDARDS; THE SECOND IS THE QUESTION OF ENFORCEMENT MACHINERY.
- WE IN COUNTRIES OF WESTERN TRADITIONS TOO FREQUENTLY ASSUME THAT THOSE STANDARDS OF CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS OUR FELLOW MAN, ARE PERCEIVED AS HAVING EQUAL VALIDITY BY OTHER GOVERNMENTS.