

During that time the Security Council has suffered its own ups and downs. There was a period when there was very grave doubt and many reservations expressed as to whether or not in fact the Security Council and, by implication, the whole of the United Nations, might have to undergo serious revision in its structures and its mechanism, because it didn't appear to be working. Some of you will remember that back in the late 1950s the Security Council in one year met only five times because of a whole series of events that occurred during that period of the cold war and the tensions between East and West. Well, since that time, slowly but to some extent one can say, satisfactorily, the Security Council has changed its shape and has, in my judgement, become more effective. That doesn't mean that it is a perfect instrument, clearly it falls far short of that; but as against those five meetings that I mentioned in one year, in the first half of 1976, the current year, the Security Council has met some 69 times and indeed, in addition to that, there have been a number of informal sessions of one type and another, so that it can be said with a good deal of accuracy that the Security Council is now almost a continuing body meeting pretty much all the time, and one which has to be seized of the many serious problems which are generating and have generated tensions throughout the world.

For all of these reasons we, in the Government of Canada, thought very seriously this year when it became apparent that our election to the Council for the fourth time was probably going to come about. We had to ask ourselves whether, indeed, it was an appropriate role for Canada and, put very frankly, we had to ask ourselves whether we were prepared to make and to take the hard decisions that I have no doubt will be put in front of us over the next two years of 1977 and '78. I think it is part of the Canadian tradition, and it's a reflection of that tradition that, while we realized the problems that lay ahead, there was not in the last analysis any serious thought on our part that we could allow this opportunity to pass, or this challenge to pass. And so it is that, as of a month from now, Canada will be back on the Security Council.

What, then, are some of the issues that I see coming before the Council in the foreseeable future? Some of them are quite easy to forecast, quite easy to predict.

Undoubtedly, the whole troubled question of Southern Africa will in one form or another find its way to the United Nations in 1977. We, of course, have no way of knowing, any more than any other country has, what is going to emerge from the present round of talks in Geneva on the future of Rhodesia, or Zimbabwe, as it is now coming more and more frequently to be called.

For our part, looking at Southern Africa in total for the moment, we have, of course, consistently rejected and denounced the apartheid policies of South Africa. There has been no waffling, no qualification in that regard. And indeed, Canada was among those countries that urged, and ultimately achieved, the voluntary embargo by a great many nations of any sales of arms or sensitive equipment to South Africa, and we have scrupulously adhered to that policy for many, many years.