

a matter for concern and should not be disposed of precipitately.

I have mentioned only four specific points which we believe must be examined carefully before a decision can be reached on the precise implications of self-determination. There are doubtless many other questions of equal or perhaps even greater importance which the General Assembly should study. I should like to say with all sincerity that the Canadian Government is (and has always been) ready and willing to play its part in finding the answers to these questions.

Dual Traditions

Finally, I would like to recall that our historical experience in Canada has been one of evolution tending to free and equal association. Our Nation, among others, encompasses peoples of many racial origins with varying religious beliefs and cultural heritages. We live freely together, and each citizen is free to think according to his own conscience and to act as he sees fit within the limitations imposed by the law. It would be a serious matter indeed if, through a decision of the United Nations, member countries were placed in a position of being morally and even perhaps legally bound to grant to these minority groups the right to determine their own institutions without consideration for the wishes of the community as a whole. For historical reasons our nation bears the dual stamp of Anglo-Saxon and French traditions. We have inherited from the old French tradition a true appreciation of the importance of formulating and codifying the rights and obligations of individuals throughout the world. Who can deny that Frenchmen have been in the vanguard of those who have sought to express in unequivocal terms the rights of the individual persons? From the Anglo-Saxon tradition we have inherited a cautious approach to the formulation of broad and theoretical principles. Because of this, we feel that there is a danger that premature formulation of principle may introduce an element of contention and rigidity in the field of self-determination when the emphasis should, in our view, be on specific cases and on flexibility. This is especially true in an age when all nations are becoming more conscious of their interdependence rather than of their separateness.

Mr. Chairman, I think I have given sufficient indication of the way in which my Delegation views, at this stage, the question of self-determination. In closing, therefore, I should merely like to emphasize that we have a keen interest in the whole subject, that we are prepared to study it carefully and to sup-

port any practical, concrete suggestions which will not involve contradictions with other Charter obligations and which appear to us to be politically advisable in their flexibility and timeliness. Whether in the context of the Draft International Covenants on Human Rights or in any other context, our attitude to self-determination will be fully in accordance with our political traditions and what we may consider to be the best interests of the peoples concerned and of the United Nations. We have no other considerations in mind. We sympathize with those governments which are genuinely anxious to find a generally agreed definition of self-determination and also appropriate measures to implement it, once defined. Our aim is that all that is feasible in this field should be done with as little delay as possible. Because we are determined to live up to our obligations we are *not* prepared, however, to subscribe to broad and imprecise statements relating to hypothetical situations. We are willing to accept solutions which will be effective and which will positively contribute to the cause of freedom in the specific situations which have to be dealt with in the very concrete world in which we live and in which this organization has to operate.

Sovereign Equality

While we believe that the United Nations can and should help to solve this problem, we do not delude ourselves that our organization will have the final word. We do not forget that the organization is based on the principle of "the sovereign equality of all its members" and that in matters of such fundamental importance as "the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples and nations" there can be no really effective action without the consent of all the parties concerned. We do not look upon "self-determination" as a new idea because, as we see it, many countries, including our own, owe their existence to the practical application over a period of time of this very idea. That is why we can have no objection to its application in the future—under generally approved safeguards.

Mr. Chairman, I hope that I have made it clear that our purpose is not to delay or to oppose constructive action, but rather to help build firmer foundations for developing friendly relations among nations, as envisaged in Article I (2) of the Charter.

I have thought it desirable to speak in rather general terms at this time. I would like, however, to reserve the right of my Delegation to intervene again when the Committee reaches the stage of considering the various proposals that have been made for further study of this problem in the United Nations.