

a reliable or legitimate interpretation" could be placed on the voting results. Among the defects noted were: the atmosphere of violence and terror, restrictions on candidates to campaign freely, the pervasive feeling that the forces policing the electoral process themselves commit the most serious human rights violations, the escalation of guerilla attacks, the exclusion of a substantial portion of the rural population, the non-participation of left and some centre representatives, the bias of news reporting, the absence of voter electoral lists, and violations of the electoral law.

The four expressed doubt that voters would be able securely and effectively to exercise their political rights, noting that the decision to vote or not to vote "may well represent concerns for personal safety". Following the elections, whatever their outcome, there would remain a need for serious negotiations between all parties to the conflict. The Canadian Government was urged in the report to support mediation through the agency of an international cease-fire monitoring group, three members of the delegation supporting the government decision not to send electoral observers and one member favouring a reconsideration.

The delegation, in its recommendations to the Canadian Government, suggested increasing provision for humanitarian assistance to Salvadoran refugees and monitoring more extensively the Central American situation. Making efforts to influence the U.S. Government to shift from a policy of military assistance to a negotiated settlement was presented as a major step in the larger endeavour to "influence all governments to end outside military assistance to the warring factions in El Salvador".

El Salvadoran elections

Canada's abstention from supporting a resolution at the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva that called for a postponement of the March 28 El Salvadoran elections until conditions exist for the effective exercise of civil and political rights, a negotiated settlement and an end to foreign arms supplies, was criticized in some media reports as indicative of Canada's lack of a strong, independent policy on El Salvador. Communiqués issued by the Canadian Rights and Liberties Federation and the NDP called for a policy less American-influenced and a stronger Canadian condemnation of human rights violations in El Salvador.

Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, in response to a question from Mr. Bob Ogle (*NDP Saskatoon East*) in Parliament March 24, emphasized the difference between Canadian and American foreign policy with regard to El Salvador, primarily the matter of supply of arms and justice and social peace. The final aim of the Canadian position is the attainment of a peaceful political settlement.

The Hon. Mark MacGuigan *Secretary of State for External Affairs*, explained that Canada had abstained from the resolution of the U.N. Commission because of the inclusion of a political portion that could not be negotiated out. Canada did not, however, fail to condemn human rights violations. Mr. MacGuigan reaffirmed Canada's commitment to the cause of human rights, stating, "we are prepared to take issue with human rights violations wherever they occur in the world because for us they are not part of domestic jurisdiction; they are a matter of international

law on which we are entitled to express opinions regardless of the domestic jurisdiction of the country involved."

FRANCE

Presidential Visit

Following a European Council meeting, French President Francois Mitterrand announced in Brussels March 30 his intention to meet with the heads of all major industrial nations, including Canadian Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau, before the Versailles Economic Summit in June. On April 1, the Prime Minister issued a statement that he would be meeting with the President of France during a brief visit the President will make to Vancouver on April 18 on his return to Paris from Tokyo, to discuss principal themes of the Summit Agenda. (*Globe and Mail* March 31)

Fishing Dispute

An incident involving French fishing vessels in Canadian waters off the coast of Newfoundland led on March 14 to Canadian fisheries officers boarding the vessels and discovering under-reported catches, according to the Hon. Mark MacGuigan *Secretary of State for External Affairs*, speaking in Parliament March 23. Mr. MacGuigan said that while the French vessels initially refused to comply with orders to report to a Canadian port for inspection, going instead to St. Pierre, after representations to the French authorities they then proceeded to Halifax where charges were laid.

Responding to questions from Mr. Donald Munro (P.C. Esquimalt-Saanich) March 24, Mr. MacGuigan stated that this particular incident was not an issue related to the continuing jurisdictional dispute with France over the waters of St. Pierre-Miquelon, but rather a problem of infringing Canadian regulations through miscalculation of the conversion factor in converting the catch into round weight figures, thereby resulting in an underestimated weight of fish taken.

Visit of French Minister of Foreign Trade

Mr. Michel Jobert, French Minister of State and Minister of Foreign Trade, visited Canada from 30 March to 3 April on the occasion of the meeting of the France-Canada Economic Commission. The purpose of the visit was to enhance trade and industrial co-operation between Canada and France.

IRAQ

Automotive Contract Cancellation

Canada's automotive industry suffered a financial blow as well as a public relations setback with the cancellation of a \$100 million contract with Iraq for the purchase of 12,500 GM Canadian-built Chevrolet Malibus. The *Globe and Mail* March 30 reported that Iraqi authorities claimed