

P R E F A C E

The international scene in 1968 presented a mixed picture of hopeful steps toward a more peaceful and prosperous world order and some discouraging setbacks. The parties to the conflict in Vietnam agreed to meet round a conference table and to begin direct negotiations for a settlement. A treaty designed to prevent further proliferation of nuclear weapons was opened for signature. The world commemorated the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and reviewed the encouraging progress that has been achieved in this field of activity. A second United Nations Conference on Trade and Development discussed measures to bridge the gap between the rich and poor nations. On the other hand, lasting peace in the Middle East appeared no closer by the end of 1968, hopes for détente in Europe were brutally discouraged by the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, and the suffering of civilians from the armed conflict in Nigeria reached proportions that shocked the whole world.

As this Report of the Department of External Affairs for 1968 demonstrates, Canada continues to play a very active role in world affairs and a constructive one. The Report records the many and varied activities of the Department, as the agency responsible for the conduct of Canada's external relations, in pursuing the objectives of our country abroad, protecting Canadian interests and assisting individual Canadians.

The Canadian Government undertook, in the course of 1968, a fundamental review of foreign policy. The review started from the premise that great changes had been taking place in recent years in our own country and in the world around us. It is therefore necessary to re-examine all aspects of our foreign policy to determine their appropriateness to the circumstances of today. The Department of External Affairs is naturally playing a very important part in this review. Its personnel have responded energetically to the requirements of a searching reassessment of Canada's role in the world while carrying on at the same time the complex tasks that enter into the day-to-day conduct of our external affairs.

I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the qualities of dedication and imagination that the men and women of the Department of External Affairs brought to their work in the year reviewed in this Report. I deeply appreciate the assistance and support I received from all of them in carrying out my responsibilities as Secretary of State for External Affairs.



Secretary of State
for External Affairs.