

changed because the cutting of the funds had resulted in a public outcry (*Globe and Mail*, January 14).

### **FIRA and NEP**

The opinion of US diplomats in Canada is that the Foreign Investment Review Agency (FIRA) is being modified to address US complaints, but that the National Energy Program (NEP) continues to disturb foreign investors. In a speech to petroleum industry businessmen at a Calgary luncheon December 20, US Ambassador Paul Robinson told the group that he was encouraged by recent modifications in FIRA administrative procedures, and what he viewed as a redefining of FIRA's role. The *Globe and Mail* (December 21) reported that "Mr. Robinson was not so optimistic about the future of the NEP . . . and considers the program discriminatory in its treatment of foreign-owned oil companies and in the provision that allows Petro-Canada to retroactively take an interest in frontier oil discoveries." He called the provision "confiscatory and unworthy of Canada."

In a speech to a business conference in Toronto January 6, US diplomat Richard Smith from the US Embassy in Ottawa also talked about these two programs. He noted "a welcome increase in FIRA's efficiency in handling investment proposals that has resulted in a marked reduction of the existing backlog of pending cases," but criticized the "retroactive back-in feature" of NEP. "This has become a significant issue for foreign investors in general, not just in the energy sector, raising questions regarding the dependability of undertakings made to investors. Canadian explanations . . . have only served to heighten investor uncertainty and uneasiness about the future," he said.

## **EL SALVADOR**

### **Canadian Delegation**

An all-party trio of MPs which had visited El Salvador and Mexico in November issued a report in December which made recommendations to the Canadian government on its policy regarding El Salvador. The fact-finding mission had been organized by the Inter-Church Committee on Human Rights in Latin America. Dr. Stanley Hudecki (Lib., Hamilton West), Rev. Walter McLean (PC, Waterloo), and Father Bob Ogle (NDP, Saskatoon East) presented their formal report to church leaders and to External Affairs Minister Allan MacEachen on December 17.

During their five-day mission, the MPs investigated the state of human rights in El Salvador and evaluated the possibility of a negotiated settlement to end the fighting in that country. The final report dealt with the human rights situation, the social and economic situation and the political situation and prognosis.

The report made recommendations to the Canadian Christian community, and to the Canadian government. It urged the government to:

- take diplomatic action by supporting political negotiations, and joining other hemispheric part-

ners such as Mexico and Venezuela in proposing the political negotiations; supporting the report and recommendations of the UN Human Rights Commission and other subsequent UN resolutions on El Salvador; and publicly expressing strong opposition to the US policy of military and economic aid to the current government of El Salvador.

— cut all financial aid to the government of El Salvador, including bilateral aid for such projects as the pipeline, and multilateral funding (i.e., International Monetary Fund, World Bank, Inter-American Development Bank and the Central American Bank for Economic Integration) until a post-conflict period of effective reconstruction has begun.

— take humanitarian action by facilitating a special immigration program for a portion of the five to six hundred political prisoners in El Salvador's jails.

The group issued a press release on December 21 which outlined the results of their discussion with External Affairs Minister Allan MacEachen. They reported that:

— the Minister reaffirmed that Canada remains open to positive actions to settle the conflict in El Salvador, such as offering the use of Canadian facilities to support a comprehensive, negotiated political settlement;

— Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy would be visiting Central America during the upcoming House of Commons recess to review the refugee situation;

— the government is preparing for the visit of the Nicaraguan foreign minister, and it is expected that talks would involve discussion about the situation in El Salvador;

— Mr. MacEachen indicated that he would give serious consideration to a request that he visit Central America;

— the Minister expressed his openness to reviewing the possibility of increased Canadian government support for humanitarian aid to the people of El Salvador to be channeled through Church and other non-governmental agencies.

The press release said that the MPs had drawn Mr. MacEachen's attention to Canada's voting record at the United Nations in the previous two weeks. "On December 10, Canada introduced amendments to a UN resolution dealing with the situation of human rights in El Salvador . . . .

The final result of the one Canadian amendment adopted in the Third Committee was to delete the Assembly's appeal to the government and other political forces in El Salvador to work together for a comprehensive, negotiated political solution. Before the final vote on the El Salvador resolution by the General Assembly on December 17, Mexico successfully introduced an amendment which re-inserted this appeal into the resolution which was finally adopted. Canada abstained in the final vote."

On December 21 the MPs talked to reporters about their findings and about Canadian policy on El Salvador. Mr. Hudecki said about the above-mentioned United Nations vote: "We have tied ourselves to US policy whether we like it or not . . . . It appears as though we have been in