

the promotion of human rights:

– Last July Canada signed the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, after having obtained the prompt accord of all the provinces. Prior to ratification, consultations will be necessary to ensure that both levels of government are prepared to undertake the obligations imposed by this new convention.

– In the UN Commission of Human Rights, Canada is engaged in an effort to work out agreements dealing with torture and religious intolerance.

– At the Commission's last session, we secured the establishment of a group of experts to investigate "disappearances" of persons. We also won a resolution calling for an assessment of mass exoduses of population and the denial of human rights, and yet another resolution affirming the right and responsibility of individuals to promote human rights within their own country.

– Finally, a Canadian is now chairing the group established to propose a human rights role for the Commonwealth.

So much for recent activities. What of the future? We hope to ensure that international law is put to the service of man – of men and women and children – everywhere in the world. We shall continue to insist on a place for human rights in international relations. We shall remain responsive to the concerns of the Canadian public. And we shall try for no less at home than what we seek abroad.

In 1772, an English court decided that a slave became a free man the moment he set foot on the British Isles. There was something grand about that sweeping, simplistic approach. Perhaps some day, the mere fact of setting foot anywhere on this planet, the mere fact of birth, will confer on every human being the plenitude of human rights.