

dignity" as the Prime Minister underlined in Washington on February 22, but equally the pluralistic nature of Canada and notably the aspirations of our French and English speaking entities.

Indeed, Canada, an open and pluralist society with a flexible political framework possesses a dynamism which can appear surprising to individuals and governments who equate political stability with institutional rigidity. For me, this is not a weakness, but a strength for Canada. It does not demonstrate division but diversity and illustrates a complex but distinct national character.

It goes without saying that attempting to reflect this pluralistic nature of our society, the very core of our strength, in all our activities on the international scene is not an easy task and inevitably leads to tensions among groups whose interests do not coincide. You should see the mail I receive on certain hot issues. For almost every letter from one seriously concerned citizen who disagrees, sometimes violently, with a position taken by my Department, there is another from an equally concerned person congratulating me for having done the right thing.

- How do you, for instance, reconcile the interest of certain groups of Canadians urging us to develop legislation to deal with the Arab boycott, with those of pro-Arab organizations asking us to be more understanding of their position or with the plight of Canadian businessmen who fear that any action we might take in that regard might endanger their chance of developing solid business contacts with Arab countries?
- I am sure you are all aware that some Canadians would have us sever all relations with regimes which, for one reason or other, they do not approve of, whereas others take pride precisely in the openness of our foreign policy and our willingness to carry on a dialogue even with those regimes we do not support, recognizing that if we do not talk with them, we certainly don't stand a chance of convincing them or of influencing their policy. Cuba is one case in point.

Those are just examples of some of the difficulties faced in shaping our foreign policy. Thus the diversity of Canadian interests and beliefs presents us with quite a challenge but we welcome that challenge and, I believe, we do a fairly good job in coping with it.