no government-to-government aid from Canada, and enjoys a substantial bilateral trade surplus with Canada based on exports of over $600 million of oil in each of the last two years. It is because Nigeria is relatively impervious to foreign influence that its military regime has already endured for 12 years, indeed all but four of the last 29 years, as noted in the first press release.

Only through high-level contact and dialogue can we encourage greater openness in other countries and advance Canadian interests at the same time. With China, our policy of engagement is built on four pillars: economic partnership, sustainable development, peace and security, and support for human rights, good governance and the rule of law. Regarding the fourth pillar in our relationship with China — support for human rights, good governance and the rule of law — the people of Canada naturally expect that our foreign policy will reflect the democratic principles upon which Canadian society is based. Our government believes that a great deal can be achieved through dialogue. While we may not always agree with our partners at the negotiating table, our strong commitment to long-term global peace and stability will keep Canada at the table.

On a bilateral basis, we have expressed our concerns on human rights to the Chinese leadership during high-level visits and meetings. The Prime Minister first did so with President Jiang Zemin during his visit to China in November 1993 and, more recently, during Vice Premier Zou Jiahua's visit to Ottawa in April 1994. Canada will continue to use both bilateral and multilateral meetings, such as the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, to express our concerns about abuses in China.

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

### ABOLITION OF ART BANK—ROLE OF MINISTER

(*Response to question raised by Hon. Eymard G. Corbin on June 14, 1995*)

The Art Bank was created in 1972 at the initiative of the visual arts section of the Canada Council, with special funds obtained through a Treasury Board submission put forward by the Secretary of State.

The supporting documents that led to the Bank's creation and to the allocation of the funds required for its first five years of operation indicated that the program would not be terminated without consulting with the Government through the Secretary of State. After the initial five years, the program was continued by the Council, which is responsible for its resource allocation, policy and administration. Since 1978, there has been no specific requirement for the Canada Council to consult with the Government. Therefore, the quoted phrase "The program will not be terminated without consultation with the government through the Secretary of State" has not been in force since then.

The decision to close the Art Bank was made by the Canada Council Board, after a strategic review of its operation and programs. The Council developed its strategic plan independently from the Department. The Council's strategic plan states that priority will be given to programs which support creation, production and dissemination of the arts, with a particular emphasis on dissemination to greater numbers of Canadians across Canada. Viewed within these objectives, the Art Bank, although a unique and valuable program of support to the visual arts, was considered not to fit within the plan: its cost of operations were said to be too high, and its program of dissemination largely limited to government office spaces.

The Canada Council has appointed a Committee of Experts to make recommendations concerning the future of the Art Bank's collection of artwork. The Committee has begun its deliberations and will report to the Board before year end. The federal Government is paying close attention to the process now underway and remains sensitive to the concerns expressed by the members of the contemporary art scene in Canada.

## INTERNATIONAL TRADE

### DISPUTE WITH EUROPEAN UNION ON NEWSPRINT—GOVERNMENT POSITION

(*Response to question raised by Hon. Gerald J. Comeau on June 15, 1995*)

Canada and several other countries are engaged in negotiations with the European Union for tariff compensation. This is owed as a result of increased import duties on Canadian and other countries' exports to Sweden, Finland, and Austria since those three countries joined the European Union on January 1, 1995. The European Union ministerial decision to implement a reduction for newsprint is considered as partial compensation only. The European Union has indicated their willingness to improve upon these tariff reductions in the final negotiations.

These negotiations are in no way related to the turbot issue and the government does not expect that Canada's action on turbot will prevent the goal of finalizing an acceptable long-term compensation package from being achieved.

Minister MacLaren has decided not to increase duty rates at this moment provided that the European Union is prepared to accelerate negotiations to conclude a final compensation package as soon as possible.