

## GENERAL DEBATE

*The General Assembly of the United Nations is the world's most universal forum, in which virtually all members of the international community, large and small, have an equal opportunity to be heard. The 147 member states take the opportunity given by the Assembly sessions to present their views on the major international issues of the day. In a wide-ranging statement delivered September 29, 1976, the Honourable Don Jamieson, Secretary of State for External Affairs, expressed the views of Canada. The following are the highlights of that speech:*

Our membership, with some notable exceptions, is virtually complete, yet there are pressures to define more strictly the obligations of membership.

Efforts to adapt the procedures and structure of the UN to accommodate new policy priorities introduce new tensions in some traditional bodies and activities.

Agreement on standards and principles of human rights is not matched by an equal determination to implement these standards without discrimination.

The Security Council meets more frequently than before, but there is no comparable increase in the number of agreed resolutions.

Acts of piracy and terror, both within and between states, undermine the principles of international law and behaviour on which the UN Charter is based.

The ideal of greater economic and social equality between nations is still far from translation into practice.

And, finally, the choice between anarchy or order on the oceans stands out before us in unmistakable clarity.

### **Universality**

Canada supports the objective of universality of membership. The Charter, it is true, speaks of certain conditions for membership, but my government takes the view that all states which apply for membership ought to be given the benefit of the doubt if such exists. Any question about the degree of independence of such states should be resolved on the basis of the opinion and practice of the majority of member states.

But Canada also believes that a member once admitted to membership should remain a member. We hold that it would be a dangerous precedent to recommend expulsion of a member state on the grounds of violation of the principles of the Charter, unless this is the consensus of the whole membership. To purge this organization of "unpopular" members could lead to the withdrawal of support by others and the paralysis of our activities. That is too high a price for us to pay.

We also hear threats from time to time to suspend the right of Israel to participate in the General Assembly. Canada would oppose such action. To deprive members of their rights in the General Assembly on grounds not justified by the Charter makes a mockery of the Assembly. Our purpose is to debate the issues, not to stifle them.

### **Institutional Change**

One implication of universality of membership must be a willing acceptance of the obligations of membership, especially by those states which play a major role in the organization. A responsible measure of participation in UN activities, especially those voluntary programs which relieve suffering or help to maintain the peace, is a sign of such willingness. As a matter of principle Canada will maintain its full and complete support for all UN organs of which it is a member. We would regret any trend towards the boycotting of UN institutions, or the unilateral reduction of assessed contributions to UN agencies, even though certain of their activities may be regarded by some states as harmful or irregular.

Nevertheless, we believe it is unwise to press resolutions to a vote on issues which deeply divide the membership. Canada regrets for example that the campaign against racial discrimination, on which there is wide consensus, should be associated with Zionism, about which there is profound disagreement. If this link is maintained, my Government will not participate in the conference to be held in 1978 on racial discrimination.

The structure of our organization and the priorities which it follows, from time to time must reflect change in the