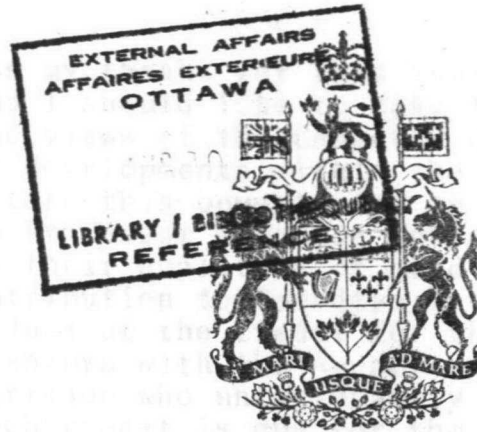


STATEMENT DISCOURS



NOTES FOR ADDRESS BY
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS,
THE HONOURABLE ALLAN J.
MACÉACHEN, TO THE CANADIAN
COMMISSION FOR UNESCO
OTTAWA, FRIDAY APRIL 2, 1976



Ladies and Gentlemen,

I should like to express my thanks for this invitation to address your Annual Meeting and I should like to take the opportunity to outline some of the views of the Canadian Government with respect to Unesco and recent developments within the Organization. I further wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Dr. Lawrence Cragg, to Professor Napoléon Leblanc, and to Mr. David Bartlett, who by their qualities of mind and spirit have made such a great contribution to Canadian involvement in Unesco and who deserve a good deal of the credit for the excellent reputation that Canada enjoys with the Agency. I should also like to mention Dr. James Harrison who unfortunately could not be here today, and to whom much credit is due for the success of Unesco's science programmes. Dr. Harrison has just retired from his post as Assistant Director, General Science, and he will be sorely missed.

I am also pleased that the Secretary General of Unesco is represented in the person of Mr. Zemi Lijady and, last but not least, I am happy that Ambassador Gagnon, our Permanent Delegate to Unesco, was able to come over from Paris for this important meeting.

It is hardly necessary to stress to you that since its beginning, Canada has firmly supported Unesco and continues to do so. We do so because we believe in the aims of the organization and because we believe in the high ideals so eloquently stated in its Constitution. Allow me to quote the words which I have in mind because I think they bear repeating. "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed." It is a sad but inescapable fact that this necessity remains, and that the purpose for which Unesco was created must still be pursued, and, I quote again, for "the purpose of advancing, through the educational and scientific and cultural relations of the peoples of the world, the objectives of international peace and of the common welfare of mankind".

Of all the U.N. specialized agencies, Unesco perhaps reaches deepest into Canada's grass roots. Through the Canadian Commission for Unesco, individuals and organizations throughout Canada are associated with Unesco programmes in Canada, and interested and involved in the international activities of the Organization.

Thus, I need hardly remind this particular assembly that Unesco is unique among the specialized agencies of the U.N. system -- unique in the sense that a major portion of its activity is devoted to an area of primary interest to provincial governments. I am referring of course to the field of education. While Article VII of the Unesco constitution makes no specific reference to the particular circumstances of federal states which are members of Unesco, the Canadian Commission for Unesco has, for some time now, wisely included as a permanent member of the Commission, and as a permanent member of its Executive Committee, a representative of

the Council of Ministers of Education. It seems to me essential that Canada's participation in a major international forum such as Unesco benefit as much as possible from the active input of those organizations and individuals within Canada who possess the necessary competence to make a positive contribution. I am therefore reassured and encouraged by the arrangements already in place with respect to the CMEC.

However, as we are all well aware, provincial government interest in the work of Unesco is not confined to the field of education. It is certainly my impression that the last few years have witnessed a significant rise in the level of interest shown by the provinces generally, and by three or four in particular, in an increasingly wide range of Unesco activities. Personally, I welcome this development, recognizing, however, as we all do, the additional pressures which it may eventually bring to bear on our administrative machinery in this period of restraint. Certainly, as far as my Department is concerned, we are prepared to do our part to facilitate the involvement of all provincial governments which consider that they are in a position either to contribute to, or benefit from, any aspect of Unesco's work and its purpose.

Over the years Canada has contributed solidly to Unesco programmes -- in science through the International Hydrological Decade, Man and Biosphere, and the International Oceanographic Commission -- in education through support to Unesco initiatives in curriculum revision, teacher training and the application of science to development -- in culture through comparative studies, and exchanges of ideas, people, museum and research specimens, books and publications. Canada has been active in efforts to clarify concepts and define good international practice in areas such as human rights, access to education, cultural co-operation and the free flow of publications.

Since the 18th General Conference of Unesco, observers and critics have increasingly referred to the "politicization" of that Organization. Political discussion is nothing new to the U.N. family of organizations. What is relatively new, however, is the proliferation and dominance in some cases of extraneous political discussion in the various specialized agencies of the United Nations. You are no doubt aware that, although the publicity given to Unesco decisions has singled out that organization more or less as a symbol of undue "politicization", other specialized agencies have also been hit by the introduction of extraneous political debate in their discussions. What is disturbing is that we now see the possibility of the type of political debate, normally associated with the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, threatening to absorb an inordinate amount of time and energy at technical meetings, and to undermine efforts to deal seriously with the substantive and technical issues these fora are expected to discuss.

This is an unfortunate development. On the other hand, we must realize that the impression that extraneous political discussion is on the increase has been magnified in the last few years by the suddenness and consistency with which the Western countries have found themselves in a minority position on many U.N. issues. And this is being widely, and sometimes dramatically, reported by the media.

This brings to mind the three decisions affecting Israel that were taken at the 18th General Conference of Unesco in 1974. One of those decisions as you will recall, referred to the question of the Israeli application for membership in the European group of Unesco. Israel was denied membership, notwithstanding Canadian support. It is deplorable that, due to overly dramatic press reporting, the impression was left that Israel had been expelled from Unesco, whereas that question, as you well know, was never raised.

The other two decisions concerned the adoption, after protracted debates, of two resolutions, one on Jerusalem and the other on the occupied territories. In the view of the Government, Unesco and the other specialized agencies were not created, and do not have the mandate, to discuss political issues. In the particular instance of the Middle East, it is clear that the broad political questions involved cannot be taken into account in an adequate manner by a body like Unesco whose competence is limited to educational, scientific and cultural affairs. It is for these reasons that the Government of Canada publicly deplores the frequency of political discussion at Unesco and the introduction of questions extraneous to the purpose for which it was established.

Within Unesco we made known our disagreement, and we stressed our strongly-held conviction that politically-inspired resolutions would not produce the desired results and might well damage the effectiveness of the organization. I considered, however, that our reaction should be measured and constructive and that we would not serve Canada's interests or those of Unesco by taking more dramatic steps. There is no doubt in my mind that we took the proper course of action if all the valuable apolitical programmes of Unesco are not to be placed in jeopardy. As a responsible member of Unesco, Canada continues to pay its assessed contributions on time in accordance with the organization's financial regulations. It is regrettable that all members were not prompted to do so and as a consequence Unesco is now facing severe financial problems.

The Director General, Mr. M'Bow, asked member states for interest-free loans last fall. Canada could not accede to such a request until other avenues had been fully explored, including commercial loans, whereby all members of the organization would have to contribute to solving Unesco's financial problems in accordance with their ability to pay. In view of the circumstances, the Prime Minister advised Mr. M'Bow that he should examine other solutions as well as exercise budgetary restraint, and encourage all members to pay their contributions as early as possible.

This being said, some may wonder if the Canadian decision to cease participation in the expert meeting on mass media last December in Paris does not in fact indicate some toughening of the Canadian position towards Unesco. I should answer to this that our decision in that instance was in no way directed against the Organization itself. As you know, the Government has vigorously opposed in the United Nations General Assembly the adoption of the resolution equating Zionism with racism. When the Unesco meeting of experts decided specifically to refer to that resolution in its programme of action and when our objections, and those of like-minded countries, were not heeded, we did not see any alternative to withdrawing from the meeting. This was done only after the seriousness of our objections, and indeed the objections of all Western countries, were clearly stated by the participants in the meeting. In similar circumstances, we would have adopted a similar attitude in any other technical meeting of any other U.N. agency. This should not prevent us from participating in the 19th General Conference next fall, although I must add that continued reference in Unesco circles to the resolution on Zionism will undoubtedly discourage Canadian action in support of any programmes that might be tainted by such a reference.

The significance of Unesco as an international organization is underscored by the role it is called upon to play in the implementation of a number of provisions of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe. It is the Government's belief that this document, which was signed on August 1, 1975, by Prime Minister Trudeau and the heads of government of the United States and thirty-three states of Europe, has set the course for the general improvement of East-West relations for years to come. Calling on the participating states to reduce the barriers which exist among them to the movement of people, ideas and culture, it specifically cites Unesco as an appropriate forum for working towards these objectives.

I am proud to be able to say that Canada played a significant role in the Conference. In so doing, we reinforced our commitment to European culture, where much of our heritage lies, and contributed to the political gains this document has achieved for Europe and for ourselves.

As an established organization with a Regional Group devoted to European affairs, in which Canada intends to participate actively, Unesco can make a lasting contribution to the promotion of understanding and confidence among governments and people. Each project it undertakes, each conference it sponsors, constitutes another step towards cementing the bonds of co-operation which the Helsinki Agreement sought to promote. People like you, who devote their time and efforts to making organizations such as Unesco successful, give strength to the hope we all share for a better world. It is indeed you who exemplify the spirit of Helsinki.

Allow me to turn now for a moment to the "changing of the guard" at Unesco Headquarters. Last year I met with the new Director General, Mr. M'Bow of Senegal, who replaced in 1974 the founding Director General, Mr. René Maheu. It is understandable that Mr. M'Bow is reshaping the Secretariat to meet the Organization's needs as he sees them, and that he has made a number of senior appointments, with some others to come. Canada is looking forward to working with the new team.

As you know, Canada is not represented on the Executive Board, and this places an added burden on Ambassador Gagnon and the staff of our Permanent Delegation in terms of keeping fully informed on Unesco directions through contacts with Secretariat officials and Executive Board members.

Looking to the future, we are now beginning our preparations for the 19th General Conference which is scheduled to be held in Nairobi, Kenya, from October 25 to November 30 this year. I need not belabour the financial restraints under which we must operate, and which dictate a smaller, though not less efficient, Canadian Delegation than is the case when the General Conferences are held at Headquarters in Paris. I am confident you will agree with this decision.

In co-operation with other government agencies concerned as well as with the national commission, my Department will soon be immersed in the planning and budget documents in which Unesco sets forth its short- and long-term programme plans and financial needs and resources. I have no doubt that the Canadian views on these documents, which will be presented at the General Conference, will be valued by member states and the Secretariat, as they have been at past conferences.

I can assure you that against the background of our concern over Unesco's financial problems, the Canadian Delegation will scrutinize the budget carefully to ensure that proposed expenditures are related to programme priorities and are solidly documented.

I am, as I am sure you are, proud of the fact that Canada is invariably among the first member states to meet its Unesco assessments each year (in Canada's case, \$2,453,535 for 1976). It is equally a matter of pride that with your active and imaginative co-operation we back up our financial contribution with our whole-hearted participation in Unesco activities.

The excellent booklet entitled "Looking at Unesco" points out that the Unesco story, if it could be expressed in a graph, would not show a tidy curve rising toward the goals of peace and justice, of liberty and human dignity which the Organization's founders set for it. Yet, although peaks and valleys would be seen in the curve, the tendency would be upward.

As I said at the beginning of my remarks, Canada believes in the aims of Unesco and the Government intends to make every effort to ensure that the organization remains true to its original purpose. With your help, Canada can continue to make an important contribution and retain its reputation as an active and constructive member.