

RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

TEXT OF STATEMENT IN EXPLANATION OF VOTE MADE BY CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE, MRS. SALLY MERCHANT, IN THE THIRD COMMITTEE ON THE DRAFT INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF RELIGIOUS INTOLERANCE

Statement No. 69

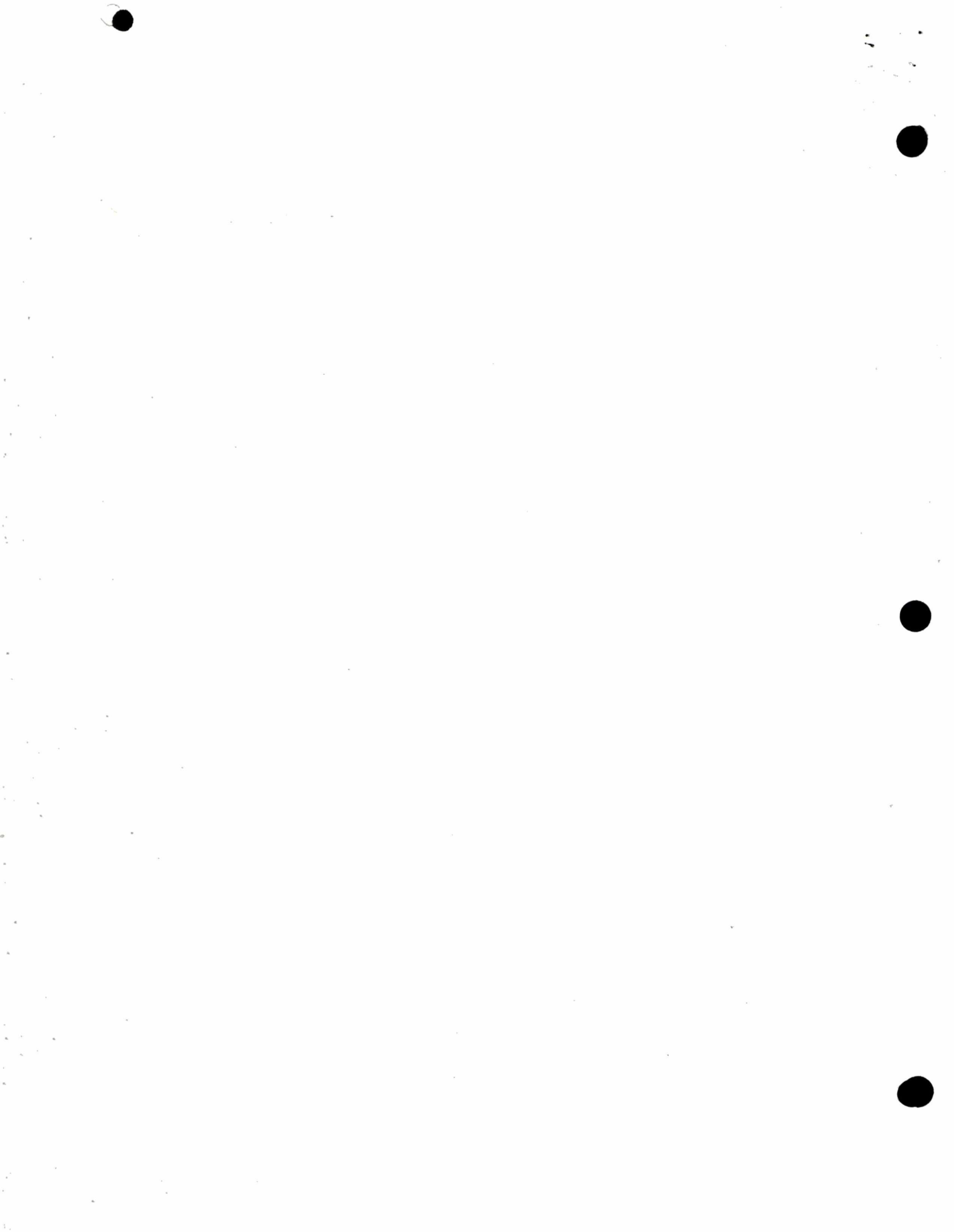
November 6, 1967.

Mr. Chairman,

Apart from Canada's position on the addition of the new paragraph, and the Saudi Arabian amendment, I would like to explain our position on one other point.

Canada was one of very few who voted against the 16-power amendment to the fourth paragraph, which limited the freedom guaranteed by the Convention to a freedom of religion or belief, rather than to the manifestation thereof. Canada regards the right to a manifestation of belief as of prime importance. The right to hold a belief without the right to manifest it is a hollow and meaningless right. Manifestation is the element that most requires the protection that a covenant offers. We voted with a very small minority to retain it.

We feel, Mr. Chairman, that there may be no real reason to take the time of the Committee to explain our vote regarding the U.S.S.R. and Nigerian amendment and the Saudi Arabian amendment. We feel that we have made our position abundantly clear throughout discussions in the Committee. Canada could not, and would not, support any addition or change in the preamble that diverted the purposes of a Convention on



Religious Intolerance from that end. In our view, the Saudi Arabian amendment did just that. We opposed it as we opposed the Nigerian and Russian amendment.

We regret that we were unable to support the amendment of Italy. Our regret was based on our appreciation of their reason for introducing it. We know that it was an effort at compromise. We know that it was based on sentiments in which we very thoroughly concur. But we judged that the substance of the amendment introduced into the preamble the same principle which we found objectionable in other amendments. It set out a second purpose or goal to which we had consistently expressed our opposition. We voted against it. We accept the exact wording of Italy's amendment in Article II. But in Article II, the purpose is simply to preclude the use of religious tolerance for other purposes. Included in the preamble we judged it to influence the entire philosophy and basis of the Convention and we could not accept it there.

Canada feels the responsibility to use its vote to produce a Convention that will serve the cause of religious tolerance in the most effective way. We fear, Mr. Chairman, to produce a Convention that could conceivably be used as a weapon against religious freedom.

