

The hon. member to whom I have referred, while he did not underestimate the difficulties, rather expressed the hope that by this kind of development--and I think I am quoting him correctly--the Commonwealth might become or lead to a third power bloc which would be powerful enough to act as a counterbalance to the United States and Russia.

With all respect, I submit that this third force concept, whether it is a Commonwealth concept or any other group of states, is a dangerous one, because it would mean that, in a sense, we in the Commonwealth were separating ourselves from the United States and coming between the United States and the NATO powers on the one hand and Soviet imperialist communist powers on the other.

I think it is much better to stick to the concept of two blocs, two forces in the world--if there have to be two--the forces of peace and the forces that we think threaten the peace. It is better to line ourselves up with the former and welcome into its ranks any free states wishing to join it. One specific respect in which the Commonwealth has been playing a useful part in recent years--and this is a matter which has been referred to by a good many speakers--is in the provision of technical and capital assistance to underdeveloped countries, especially those in Southeast Asia and the Indian subcontinent under what we call the Colombo Plan. The Colombo Plan, of course, is more than a Commonwealth arrangement; but it was Commonwealth in inspiration and organization. It has proved its value and I hope it will continue to do so.

In this debate, some very strong criticism has been levelled at the Government by my hon. friends opposite and by some members of the official opposition, that we have not played an honourable part in this Colombo Plan; that what we have done was--I think the words were--a mere pittance, or, as it was referred to by one speaker, an insult to the needs of the problem. Well, of course, as is nearly always the case in any human endeavour, we could have done more. But to keep this project in perspective I need only point out that in the four years of the plan, capital and technical assistance from outside the countries which are members of the plan has been contributed to the amount of \$1,300,000,000; last year \$340 million, of which Canada will have contributed \$128,400,000. That is not large in terms of expenditure on other things. I would be the first to admit that; but I would point out to those who criticize us so bitterly--perhaps "bitterly" is not a fair word, but criticize us so strongly--and I am not objecting to that--and who relate our expenditures in this field to those which we have to make on defence, that the primary of expenditures on defence is admitted by those very countries which we are helping and who need our help; it is admitted to a point where some of these countries which are receiving capital assistance--and I say this in no way of criticism at all--are now devoting more than half of their already inadequate budget to defence. And some of those countries that are devoting such a high percentage of their budget to defence are the first to proclaim that they have no feeling of menace from attack by outside communist states.