

### Food Aid

20 or more years we have seen a kind of boom and bust psychology. From time to time the alarm signals would go up about the dangers of massive international food shortages. Undoubtedly in the early 1970s there were crop failures. There was a particular failure with respect to adequate feed grain requirements for the Soviet Union. The fact that the U.S.S.R. moved into the American market in 1972 in a major way, removing something like 12 million to 15 million tons of grain from the American market at such short notice caused the price to increase by some 300 per cent. Of course, it had a major impact both on the domestic consumer in developed countries as well as the developing countries themselves and their own purchasing power with respect to food aid requirements. That has often been referred to as "the great grain robbery" by the Soviet Union.

The long term situation, in spite of the major increases in production in the last year or so, does remain bleak. Current projections by the International Food Research Institute show that the food deficit in the least developed countries, as well as many developed countries, will continue to grow. By the last quarter of this century the deficit of the least developed countries will have reached proportions that neither food aid nor affordable imports will be able to satisfy, resulting in vastly increased starvation possibilities.

To avoid that particular situation it is important that we turn our attention to the possibility of action now. One of the most impressive things about this particular issue of *The Economist* is that while recognizing the rumours of famine and the fears of famine in the 1972 to 1974 period, now, some 34 months later, world food supply is in glut. While there is still a famine for those who are unable to get food, elsewhere there is a surplus supply. The danger they point to is the one best represented by the action of the United States President, Mr. Carter, who has already indicated that he wants a 20 per cent cut in acreage for 1978, and will probably ask for a 10 per cent cut in acreage under animal feed grains. As *The Economist* said, this policy is a pity. I agree with that. The article goes on to say:

One of the policies recommended at Rome could now be becoming a good one. It was for the building of a large international reserve of grain. During a supposed famine this planned withholding of supplies from the starving would have been crazy, but during a period of temporary world food surpluses it becomes plausible. The best decision would be not to cut American wheat acreage in 1978 but to distribute food stamps (which have worked surprisingly well in the United States) to the poor of the world. These food stamps should not be usable only for buying American (or other foreign) grain, but should also be reimbursable when they come into the hands of local farmers when they have sold grain, including rice, locally.

I will not go further into the details suggested by *The Economist*, except to mention that obviously the time is ripe for us to take some concrete action toward an effective international food bank and grain reserve system. Members will know that there has been intense and increased interest in this possibility over the past few months, but to date no satisfactory progress has in fact been achieved. I suppose the problem is really politics. The dangers to producing countries are so great that the political will has not been sufficient yet to mount an effective reserve program.

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

Without that political will there exists the temptation for processors to press for a cartel. Fears of this arose in January of last year when the new U.S. secretary of agriculture, Robert Bergland, initiated talks with our own officials. Since then these discussions have extended to other producers and have begun to include importing nations through the International Wheat Council. Obviously, Mr. Speaker, it is not just a question of establishing a food reserve system. We have to look at our own situation in Canada and see whether in the spirit of economy and conservation we are making satisfactory arrangements for our own food needs.

The reason that this particular motion has been phrased in the way it has is to emphasize the growing imbalance in terms of the consumption of both the renewable and non-renewable resources of this planet. It is quite shocking that 20 per cent of the world's population should consume and exploit 75 per cent of the world's resources. As Madam Gandhi at one point remarked, the developed countries produce 90 per cent of the world's garbage. Worse than that is the statistics for those who are in the poorest group. Some 60 per cent of the world's population are using only 10 to 12 per cent of the earth's resources. This imbalance continues to grow.

We know in our own country that food is wasted every day and is being consumed in the most expensive way possible. If this motion does nothing else, hopefully it will remind us that our number one problem is being responsible with respect to the tremendous resources that are produced and are available in this country, while two-thirds of the world's population goes to bed hungry every night. Our problems are best described by a sign which I saw in a medical clinic in Regina a few months ago. I believe this was a public health clinic which offered a variety of services to the people of Regina. At the top of the list the most prominent health service provided at this particular clinic was a weight reducing program. That is the problem we face today in Canada. It is not the problem of having sufficient or adequate food on a day to day basis, but of having it in such an amount that it is counterproductive to our own good health.

Another issue I wish to raise is the problem of disarmament. In going from the problem of food supply to arms expenditures one has the sensation of living in a mad world. I mean mad quite literally. The technical term used to describe the defence standoff relationship today between the Soviet Union and the United States is known as "mutual assured destruction". The three initials of the word spell MAD. Mutual assured destruction means that there is the nuclear capability in both countries to destroy the globe many times over.

A couple of years ago the international development subcommittee of this House, in looking at recommendations for the upcoming conference on trade aid development, said this:

We are struck by the immensity of having to raise \$5 billion for agricultural investment over the next several years until we recall that each year the world now spends about \$300 billion in the purchase of weapons.

Actually that was understating it. Even at that time, according to the Peace Research Institute, in 1976 \$334 billion was spent on military expenditures by the world community. This