

Supply—External Affairs

this government in Ottawa because it has stood so resolutely and so long for African nationalism. Is this what happened? The answer again is no. The government in Canada was snubbed and slighted and received no thanks for the stand it held so stubbornly.

Would we as Canadians have dared to appeal to the government of Malawi to ease its pressure on the religious group, the Jehovah Witnesses, in that country? Has this government listened to the representations to use its good influences with that state on behalf of this religious sect, which is being persecuted there now? The answer again is no. Not only would we be afraid and hesitate even to suggest such a thing to them, but there is no good will on which to rely. Nothing has been gained from our policy in Rhodesia and in South Africa through the years.

We have no influence with the governments of the undeveloped nations, of Africa, many of which are far more sophisticated politically than is this government in Ottawa. They know that this government will never change its policies, so they are free to advocate a course of democratic freedom at the United Nations and to practise whatever policy they wish against their own people in Africa.

Dare we involve ourselves in the apartheid that is being practised in Nigeria at the present time? We may wring our hands and deplore the unhappy situation there. I noticed an appeal on behalf of Biafran refugees from Africa landed on my desk recently. It was endorsed by various members of this chamber. We know that because of the very policies that this government has followed so long, we have no influence in Nigeria.

● (9:40 p.m.)

We have been so busy attacking the governments of South Africa and Rhodesia that we have shut our eyes entirely to the evils of apartheid being practised in other sections of the same continent. I hold no brief at all for apartheid, but I believe that our policy in the southern regions of South Africa should be one of far greater realism than the one we have been so wishfully and wistfully following for so long. I think we would be of far greater assistance to all the peoples of Africa, black and white, if we were to follow a policy that improved the development of that part of the world and ended our policy of sanctions, because it is useless, wasteful and damaging to the very people it is designed to help. We could go so far as to recognize the existing government of Rhodesia.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall vote 10c carry?

Mr. Prittie: Mr. Chairman, I rise only to ask the minister whether he is going to make any statement or reply concerning the points about external aid which I raised, and which my colleague the hon. member for Springfield raised this afternoon. I should like at some time to have some comments from the minister on this subject.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Chairman, the agencies of the United Nations, as my hon. friend so well knows, are particularly well placed to render assistance in the field of family planning and to assist countries which request it. The United Nations development program, the World Health Organization and UNICEF are all in one way or the other attacking the problem of family planning at the request of the less developed countries. The Canadian government is of course a major contributor to the budgets of these organizations, and we are taking an increasing and definite interest in this matter.

Mr. Johnston: Mr. Chairman, could I ask one question of the minister? Has the Canadian government made any representation to the government of Malawi on behalf of the Jehovah's Witnesses group there, who have alleged a policy of religious persecution being waged against them in recent months?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Chairman, we have complained of discrimination against various religious bodies in a number of countries. I cannot say offhand whether we have in this particular instance, but I will make immediate inquiries. If representations have been made to us, or we are made aware of such representations, we do take strong action.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Grégoire: Mr. Chairman, I would like to take advantage of the study of the supplementary estimates of the Department of External Affairs to deal with something new, a matter widely discussed during the last month.

I mean the incident between Canada and Gabon, a small African country with a population of approximately 575,000 inhabitants, that is hardly more than that of Quebec city and its suburbs. One day the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) tells us that relations between Canada and Gabon have been broken off.