

United Nations

Prior to the war their merchant marine fleet amounted to 2 million tons, but by the end of the war 75 per cent of the fleet had been destroyed. At the beginning of the war they had 713 sailing vessels and they lost 472, or 66 per cent. The same spirit of destruction affected the big Greek canal which joined the Aegean and Ionian seas. All the carnage of war that could be collected was dumped into the canal, and I am doubtful if it is open even at this date. The canal had been of great benefit to the people. It was practically destroyed, and will take many years to repair.

The forests of the country were also completely destroyed; in fact even the olive trees were burned for fuel. There is no coal in Greece, and it was found necessary to get fuel of some sort. For that reason everything that would make fuel was cut down and destroyed. After the war their forests were completely gone. When we were there in 1948 a few of their olive trees had begun to produce again, but it will be years and years before the production will compare with that of the pre-war period. Livestock was destroyed almost to the same extent. In fact their beasts of burden were completely annihilated. They did not have any kind of animal with which to do their plowing and till the soil.

After three and a half years of German occupation the country was liberated. When we on this continent read about liberation we get the impression that the worries of these people are over, but from my short visit to that grand country I could see that their troubles had just started. Having gone through four years of destruction, it will perhaps be fifty years before the country is restored. If more Canadians had firsthand knowledge of such conditions perhaps our feelings with respect to assistance might be different. We read, but we do not realize what these people have had to contend with. I believe that anything we can do to assist these noble people is a step in the right direction.

I have no idea how far it is possible for us to go, but I for one support the resolution introduced today, knowing that anything we do will be appreciated by the people in these countries, and will be one of the greatest steps we can take in order to bring about that feeling of respect which we hope may some day result in world peace. In my opinion the benefits that may be provided can never be reckoned in dollars and cents, and we must look forward to those benefits. I see that the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming) is in his seat. He could give you a further description of the conditions we witnessed nearly five years ago.

[Mr. Stuart (Charlotte).]

Before resuming my seat I want to say again that if it were only possible for more Canadians to see the conditions under which these people are trying to survive, I believe our generosity might be greater.

Mr. F. G. Robertson (Northumberland, Ont.): I welcome this opportunity, Mr. Speaker, of speaking to the resolution proposed by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mr. MacInnis), namely:

That, in the opinion of this house, the government should consider the advisability of introducing legislation at this session to substantially increase Canada's contribution to the United Nations technical assistance organization fund.

Practically every speaker who has taken part in this debate has indicated his support of the resolution. Personally I believe that our Canadian government has a creditable record in this regard, especially when we recall the amount of money being spent on the Colombo plan as well as the various specialized agencies of the United Nations, all of which involve technical assistance to a very large degree. I believe we can say that we are playing our full part.

We all appreciate, of course, that this is an important feature of United Nations work. In fact we cannot do too much to help the underdeveloped countries of the world. I believe when we see the amount of money being spent, which in itself is not a modest amount, and when we compare it with what is being spent by other countries, then we have no reason to be ashamed of the part Canada is playing.

I listened with much interest to the speeches of all hon. members this afternoon. The speeches delivered by the hon. member for Victoria, B.C. (Mr. Fahey) and the hon. member for Vancouver South (Mr. Philpott) were based largely on their own experience in the underdeveloped countries. The experience of the hon. member for Victoria, B.C., was a result of his work as an official of a technical assistance program in Burma, whereas the experience of the hon. member for Vancouver South resulted from travelling through the underdeveloped countries. I am sure we all felt they made a worth-while contribution to the debate today.

I was particularly interested in the speech made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson). As usual he gave us a very able and comprehensive report. I was particularly impressed by the fact that, in stressing the need of the underdeveloped countries, he made a point of the fact that we should speak of these countries only as being materially underdeveloped. He pointed out that some of these other countries were, in many ways, as well equipped as we are. This fact was underlined for me today