

*External Affairs*

I feel, however, that he should have added to his statement a third section equal in length to either of the first two, and that section should have dealt with the whole question of economic assistance and technical aid to underdeveloped countries. He should have dealt at some length with the present famine situation in India, and he should have told parliament and the country what reason the government has, if indeed it can have a reason, for its failure to act in a generous manner toward India now in its time of need. Therefore I criticize the Secretary of State for External Affairs, not so much for what he said, but for what he omitted to say in his statement of a week ago. That omission underlines the basic difference between the foreign policy of the government and the foreign policy supported by the C.C.F. party. We believe that far greater emphasis should be placed now on the need for economic and long-term technical assistance to the underdeveloped countries of southeast Asia.

On May 2 I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) whether the government would consider a grant of food to India or a grant of money with which to buy food. The answer was that no policy in that regard had yet been decided upon. Eight days later the same question was asked by the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Macdonnell), and he was given the same reply. In other words, the government has no policy to help meet the situation in India where millions of people are confronted with the threat of starvation. I do not think I have to emphasize the situation existing in India today. It has been reported in the press many times in the last few months. Officials of the Indian government in Canada and in the United States have pointed out that millions of India's citizens are today facing possible death through starvation, that in some areas the cereal ration, which had been twelve ounces per person per day, has been reduced to nine ounces, and in other areas to a meagre six ounces.

As I say, that situation is well known to the government, to members of parliament and to the people of Canada, and for the life of me I have no idea why the government has not acted in a generous way by helping India in this her time of need. Other countries in the world have taken action. Great Britain, with its austerity, and labouring under a severe defence burden, found it possible as long ago as October to divert to India 42,480 tons of wheat that she had purchased from Australia. She not only diverted that large quantity but provided the tonnage for its shipment to India. While the United States administration has not been

too effective so far in its efforts to help, it has done its duty by calling upon congress to pass the necessary legislation to supply two million tons of wheat to India.

Recently we learned that China is likely to provide a million tons of food grain in addition to 50,000 tons of rice. Even Russia is supplying 50,000 tons of food, and the Prime Minister of India has said that he hopes he may get 500,000 tons in all. As a producer of surplus food, Canada is certainly in an excellent position to be generous to India. Surely we do not have to leave help of this kind to Great Britain, China, Russia, or to the United States. Surely on humanitarian grounds, if for no other reason, a Christian nation like Canada should be prepared to help human beings in any part of the world facing a situation such as prevails in India at the present time.

In order to emphasize that point, I should like to say that I received, as did other hon. members, a letter dated May 12 and sent from the chaplain's office, Hart House, university of Toronto. It reads as follows:

In view of the increasing indications that famine in Bihar and Madras will become critical by the end of May, we would again urge our government to send substantial supplies of food to India at once, even at the risk of depleting our own stocks. We urge that this food be sent on humanitarian grounds, regardless of political considerations, as evidence of good will to fellow members of the commonwealth; we urge that it be sent as a gift, or on terms acceptable to the government of India.

The letter is signed by Patrick Daniel for the food for India committee. The names of the members of the committee are on an attached page. Among them one finds dignitaries of many of the great churches of Canada, the Y.W.C.A., heads of departments at the university of Toronto, and other well known citizens. On the second page of the letter there is the following:

We are also aware that theoretically Canada's situation is such that we have no other wheat available. But our concern, which we believe is the concern of a large number of the Canadian people, is that nothing should be left undone to get food to India as rapidly as possible.

The Canadian people, generous and Christian as they are, are prepared to make a substantial sacrifice if necessary in order that large quantities of food may be shipped to India to prevent starvation. In my judgment the only thing that stands in the way of action by the Canadian people at this time is the government's indifferent attitude. The government alone appears unwilling to grant large quantities of food to India, or to take such other measures as may be necessary to see that such large quantities of food do reach the Indian people.

In addition to humanitarian grounds, there are ideological grounds which would warrant

[Mr. Argue.]