

Oral Questions

When will we have a statement from the Minister that outlines the Canadian position? When will we have active Canadian engagement in this debate and support for negotiation on this matter?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member seems to believe that active involvement by Canada in these international questions involves making unilateral statements here in the House of Commons.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): What is involved and required is for Canada to continue to play an active role in the leadership of NATO. This will allow NATO, particularly in the context of the fortieth anniversary celebrations and Summit later this month, to proceed along a path that will lead it toward negotiation, and also when the time comes to move forward on modernization, will give effect to the agreement by all the heads of the NATO countries a year ago to proceed with modernization. That is the position of Canada. The role of Canada is to ensure we will make a constructive contribution to international discussions that will lead to greater stability and security.

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THE BUDGET

CUTS IN ODA FINANCING

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister for External Relations. This Government consistently presents itself as a defender of our global commitment to the poorest, a country with great concern and commitment to the world's hungry and the dispossessed including millions of Third World children. Canada's commitment to official development assistance traditionally accounts for about 3 per cent of total Canadian Government expenditure, but the Budget slashes to ODA account for 29 per cent of all Budget expenditure cuts. What credibility does Canada possess in the light of such doubletalk about our caring concern?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that if the Hon. Member

wants to be fair, or should I say responsible, she must recognize that at this point the Government of Canada cannot go on with a kind of debt load that would preclude future aid programs or other commitments to Canadians.

This Government's actions are now predicated upon the ability to increase eventually all services, both national and international.

Now I would like to tell the Hon. Member that over these last four years we have increased aid funding by \$800 million and even after this year's 5.6 per cent reduction, we will go on over the coming years, over the next four years increasing aid funding by \$800 million.

This is a commitment to aiding developing nations this Government has always honoured.

[*English*]

COMMITMENTS TO THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the same Minister. Under this Government, Canada has consistently reneged on its Third World assistance commitments.

• (1500)

Last Friday I received a letter from the Minister for External Relations with an enclosed overview of CIDA which reiterated the Government's previous commitments. The Budget denies this.

How does the Minister account for this absurdity of contradiction? Will the Minister agree that she failed to defend ODA-GNP ratios as committed by her and that she has badly let down Canada and Third World countries?

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations): Mr. Speaker, I would like to repeat to the Hon. Member what I said this morning in committee which is that this Government has been adhering to the gross national product share formula. As soon as next year we will increase aid funding, which will grow by \$800 million over the coming years. And this, Mr. Speaker, is a firm commitment. Also, we are maintaining our commitment to our major priorities under the strategy put forward by the Canadian Government last year.