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this weekend by the PM to persuade the Government of Great Britain, which has been so incredibly lax in facing the reality of apartheid, to face the situation now. I hope the Prime Minister has been talking to Mrs. Thatcher as we have begged and urged him to do. I think it would be valuable also if the Prime Minister had done the same with the Vice-President of the United States here in Ottawa today. None of us wants to see—goodness knows, we would abhor the thought—the break-up of the Commonwealth. We must do everything we can to make sure that that does not happen. Unless we get action now on sanctions against apartheid, it will happen.

All the talk and pressure that we can bring to this urgent problem however, does not absolve us from doing what we said we would do, and that is to impose full sanctions. I cannot yet understand, and I hope the Government when it is replying today will tell us, why the Government did not do what it said it would and impose such sanctions. It would give a real signal to the Government of South Africa—it would have given and will give only if we do it this weekend—a signal to all members of the Commonwealth—and perhaps above all a signal to the United Kingdom. It would show the strength and passion of our conviction because this is a moral issue. We say we know where we stand on this moral issue. If we really do believe in what we say, and I think we do, then we do not wait until August, we do not even wait until next week before we, ourselves, live up to what we believe in.

We can live up to what we believe in, Mr. Speaker, and continue to exercise the kind of influence that I know we have with the other members of the Commonwealth. In fact, I am confident that our influence would be even greater if we stood up now, said and then did what we said we would and so reinforce our beliefs. I think others would say that Canada is not just talking, that Canada understands the situation, because I think we do, and that Canada is taking action on the basis of that understanding.

We in this House are surely mindful of what the Eminent Persons Group told us in its moving introductory words of the report: "None of us was prepared for the full reality of apartheid. As a contrivance of social engineering it is awesome in its cruelty." The group concluded that sanctions may offer the last opportunity to avert what could be the worst blood-bath since the Second World War. The words used are strong, moving, persuasive. But have we listened? Did we look at our television screens just last night—the last we are going to see, I am afraid, because of the repressive crushing of free speech in South Africa under the new state of emergency—to see what is happening in South Africa? We have seen for ourselves what the group told us it discovered, that as a contrivance of social engineering, apartheid is awesome in its cruelty.

Is it possible at all in this debate to continue the leadership role that I believe not only the Canadian Government but Canadians everywhere have undertaken? Several of the provinces and the labour movement in Canada have taken very strong stands against apartheid. Can we as the Parliament of

Canada, and can our Government now continue that leadership, respond to the concerns of people all over this country and all over the world? Can we do that this weekend, not later, and send the strongest possible message to reinforce the hopes, desires and dreams of the black people of South Africa and of all the other members of the Commonwealth? We can do that, Mr. Speaker, and we must do that. We can and must.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): First, I want to thank the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) and the Hon. Member for New Westminster—Coquitlam (Ms. Jewett) for, and I quote one of them: "the urgency and the passion" which they have brought to this debate.

This is obviously an issue that is important to all of us. Important is not a strong enough word. This is an issue that I think in our hearts and our souls we all know is one of the great issues and, at the moment, one of the great sorrows of our time.

My colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) is one of the most sensitive people to this issue, and I think the work that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) has done with his counterparts in the Commonwealth nations has shown the commitment which this Government has in the full knowledge that it reflects the concern on behalf of this House and on behalf of the people of Canada.

[Translation]

Canada was the first major western country to take concrete measures when the situation started to deteriorate in South Africa. Later on, France and Australia followed suit. The Common Market only recently announced an embargo on oil shipments.

Canada was the first country to show its disapproval by cancelling its conventions for the avoidance of double taxation. Canada is the only Western country that has taken action on the processing of uranium from Namibia and put an embargo on commercial flights to South Africa.

The range of measures we have taken to help Blacks inside South Africa has not been equalled by any other country. Our per capita aid is probably more substantial than that provided by any other country.

• (1540)

[English]

As we watch the situation, we know that further measures cannot be ruled out. We have told this House and the people of Canada that we shall continue to apply mounting pressure. We have said that in concert and consultation with friendly Governments, including our Commonwealth partners. As was thoughtfully pointed out by the Eminent Persons Group, among others, the concerted effort of the Commonwealth is an