

deductions, pensions and subsidized education, where the incentives are geared towards convincing people to have small families. Education is an important tool. For instance, in Latin America, women who have completed primary school average two children less per family than those who have not. Raising the status of women, by providing education, developing skills in women and offering wider opportunities for women, all improve the chances for a lower birth rate. I applaud the government's support for this issue in its program.

Still, one cannot be complacent. There is a sense of urgency. Some 35 per cent of the present world population is composed of people under the age of 15 years. The World Bank reported in 1974 that countries which offer family planning services in their health programs now account for over 80 per cent of the population, but the proportion of women who, when exposed to the risk of pregnancy, use a method of contraception, is less than 20 per cent. The recent world fertility survey showed that nearly one-half of women who said that they did not want any more children were not using any method of contraception.

Finally, of the approximately 500 million women in the world today who are capable of bearing children, 70 per cent use no contraceptive methods at all. The desire to control fertility is there, but the means to do it are absent or not well understood. As a result there are millions of abortions. More should be done to stem population increases and to cut back on abortions. The need and demand for population assistance is great, but as the Brandt commission reported, the UNFPA can only handle two-thirds of the requests it receives.

● (2110)

If we look at El Salvador, for instance, we see a real tragedy. El Salvador's population statistics are intolerable, and no doubt they have played—perhaps the Leader of the New Democratic Party (Mr. Broadbent) can tell us about this—a role in the present crisis. El Salvador has a 3.2 per cent annual increase in population, meaning that its population will double in only 22 years. The figure for Canada is 89 years. The average number of children per woman is 5.8 in El Salvador compared with Canada's 1.8.

Forty-five per cent of the population of El Salvador is under 15 years of age, and already in 1981 there are 383 people per square kilometre of arable land in the country. El Salvador faces real structural problems, which undoubtedly have a definite bearing on the present hostilities there and do not augur well for the future.

Population policies and programs of action touch upon the most intimate of human relationships—the act of love and the family—and involve other basic institutions such as the church and school. For this reason population assistance operates best on a personal, grassroots level, showing respect for the feelings of those concerned and suited to fit the needs and cultural values of the recipients. To be successful a policy must reach and affect the behaviour of individual people and be accepted by them. This decentralized grassroots approach is quite different from a loan for a factory or an airport, the effects of which, good or ill, operate indirectly.

House of Commons

A continuing role for multilateral assistance in population through international organizations must remain. These organizations, particularly UNFPA, are able to transmit and collect information, lend experts to needy countries and propagate certain technological advances. I ask our government to increase its support to UNFPA.

I approve of the government's intention to increase funds to the NGOs, and I ask that the International Planned Parenthood Federation receive increasing financial assistance. After all, the IPPF is the second biggest international voluntary organization in the world, after the Red Cross.

Finally, I share with the task force the view that Canada has great potential for leadership in North-South relations. I wish to point out that there exists ample Canadian resources in the field of population studies. I hope that our highly trained demographers, sociologists, geographers, and physicians with expertise in the population field might be given a larger role to play in matters of population assistance to the South. Similarly, the statisticians at Statistics Canada and the demographers with the International Development Research Centre here in Ottawa could and should play more active roles.

Population should no longer be a forgotten factor in Canadian or world development strategy. Rather, I hope that the government will incorporate a population component wherever possible in new development projects financed by official development assistance.

Before closing I would like to say that it would be my hope that the government would see fit at either or both the upcoming summits here in Ottawa and the one in Mexico to give serious consideration to putting this subject on the agenda.

I will close with the words with Dr. Salas, and I quote:

Interest in population is not a concern with the figures on a chart or the curves on a graph alone, however important they may be, but essentially an involvement with the future of humanity itself.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF FORMER PREMIER OF
NEWFOUNDLAND

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): With the permission of the House I would like to draw the attention of hon. members to the presence in the Speaker's gallery of a very distinguished visitor, namely the former premier of Newfoundland, the hon. Joey Smallwood.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!