achieve .7 per cent of GNP. That was delayed until 1990, then postponed until 1995. Now it has been postponed until the 21st century.

Despite all the problems facing Canada, such as high unemployment in some of our regions, we are still a rich country and we, of all nations, could afford to do better. I wish the House would not spend the time on this legislation but on the whole topic of Third World debt and make a commitment to do a better job for Third World countries.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Alex Kindy (Calgary East): Madam Speaker, when I look at Bill C-62, I wonder whether it is the general policy of this Government to cancel debts. Is this a special case or will this policy be extended to other countries? If this is a precedent and there are other such cases, we could find ourselves cancelling all foreign debts, and our treasury would soon be in trouble.

On the one hand, if these countries are having major difficulties, I can, understand that we might want to cancel their debt for humanitarian reasons. On the other hand, I am wondering if it is now open general policy to say that if a country is unable to pay back its debt, this debt will be cancelled.

About a year ago, I visited Peru, which owes something like $450 million to Canada. This country is also under-developped and quite poor. Are we going to do the same for this country at some time in the future?

I think that we should have a discussion on this issue and that it would probably be a good thing to refer this Bill to a legislative committee where it could be discussed and improved.

[*English*]

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Do I have the unanimous consent of the House for the Minister to answer the Hon. Member?

Some Hon. Members: No. Question.

• (1840)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Am I to understand there would be unanimous consent of the House to go into Committee of the Whole?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Kindy: No. I have a reservation. I asked a question and somebody said they could not give me the answer, so I am not giving unanimous consent.

Mr. Lewis: I suggest to my hon. colleague that if we were to proceed to Committee of the Whole House, upon the appropriate clause being read, it would be appropriate for my hon. colleague to ask the Minister the question at that time.

Mr. Kindy: I understand the explanations of the Parliamentary Secretary, but his attitude was certainly not conducive to my getting an answer. Therefore, I am going to refuse unanimous consent.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Perhaps the Chair could be of some help. It was not possible at the time the Hon. Member requested an answer from the Minister for the Chair to recognize the Minister again during second reading. Certainly the Minister could answer all questions should the House decide to study the Bill in Committee of the Whole House, but I need unanimous consent.

I wanted to explain the reason why I could not give the floor to the Hon. Minister.

Mr. Kindy: So I will give my consent and, if the House agrees, it is unanimous consent.

[*Translation*]

Motion agreed to, Bill read the second time and the House went into committee thereon, Mrs. Champagne in the Chair.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Shall Clause 2 carry?

Mr. Kindy: Madam Speaker, I would like to repeat my question and ask the Minister whether it would be Canada's general policy to forgive the debts of all less developed countries.

Mrs. Landry: Yes, Madam Speaker. I would like to say briefly to my hon. friend what I mentioned earlier in my speech, namely that at the special conference at the United Nations in 1977, Canada decided to forgive the debts of the least developed countries appearing on the UN list. At the time, the following countries were exempted from repaying their debts: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Benin, Botswana, Laos, Malawi, Mali, Nepal, Niger, Tanzania, Uganda and Upper Volta.

A Bill was passed previously in this House to forgive the debts of these countries. However, at the time, Togo, Mauritania and the East African Community were not among the least developed countries. Since they have now been added to the list, we believe it is appropriate, since these countries are experiencing problems today, to make the provisions of the same Bill applicable to them as well, but to do so, we have to table a new Bill. We are doing so simply to bring everything in line with the decision made at the time in 1977, so that we can extend the same treatment to Togo, Mauritania and the former East African Community. Their debt was endorsed by three countries, namely Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya, and we are therefore cancelling that part of the debt.