

120. When he was asked about the aid structures in the governments of other donor countries, Mr. Strong, in a series of specific references, questioned the assumption that development assistance enjoys stronger advocacy in their Cabinet councils. He added that he had discussed this question with his counterparts in those countries and "concluded that for us our system was the best system." Mr. Strong also pointed out that, under the present system, it would be possible in future to transfer responsibility for CIDA to some other senior portfolio if that became desirable.

121. As to the question of a crown corporation, Mr. Strong was most frank about the evolution of his own views. He said,

... "I have thought a lot about this particular question. When I first came to CIDA I had the predisposition towards a Crown Corporation type of arrangement, but I have come around to the view that because it gets its money from the government because of what I mentioned earlier that development no longer is just a matter of aid but is a matter of influencing the totality of government policies vis-à-vis the developing countries, I think CIDA has to be close to the power centre of government. Inherently in a national government the aid agency is never really part of a central power structure, it is just not in the nature of things. Therefore, if it were a Crown corporation it would probably have more operating flexibility in terms of operating its programs, but it would really have far less influence than it must have on the central organs of government policy. So I am persuaded that it should not be a Crown corporation, that it should be part of the departmental structure of government."

122. Having questioned the value of either a separate aid ministry or a Crown corporation structure, Mr. Strong made his own recommendations on the basis of his experience.

"What I would like to see and what I fought for all the time I was there was a greater degree of operating flexibility. I think it is quite unreal to expect the aid agency, CIDA, will be subjected to exactly the same rules as, say, the Department of Public Works and the Post Office running a domestic operation. When you have to work in a co-operative relationship with 50 or 60 different governments and you are trying to adjust, trying to accommodate to their situation, to try to force our bureaucratic procedures on them is quite wrong. I think it should be possible, and we have made some progress in this area. I do not want to suggest it is entirely negative. One of the things that always frustrated me in government is the sameness. Uniformity seems to be the great god. Everything that you do must be applied uniformly throughout the government. I think that a good strong case could be made for giving CIDA more operating flexibility without sacrificing any

of the essential principles of government control or effectiveness."

123. In considering these various alternatives, the Subcommittee began with the assumption that, if the overall official aid effort is to be concerted and effective, CIDA must be able to exercise effective influence in the highest decision-making councils of government. Ideally, on this basis, the solution would be to raise the Agency to a full ministry with clearly senior status attaching to the portfolio. Apart from augmenting the influence of the "aid viewpoint", this kind of action would be a clear demonstration, in this country and abroad, of Canada's firm and continuing commitment to a sustained, long-term international development effort. Unfortunately, however, it is clear that powerful ministries and senior portfolios cannot be created by simple fiat. As Mr. Strong pointed out, in other countries where high priority has been placed on this portfolio in theory, in practice it has generally slipped into a position of lesser importance. While not inevitable, such an outcome would appear likely in Canada at present. The Subcommittee is not convinced that CIDA would occupy a more influential position than at present as a junior ministry. Indeed, a net loss of political influence might be suffered as it would probably prove more difficult to recruit men of the eminence of M. Paul Gérin-Lajoie or his predecessor to the operating direction of the agency. The strength of its current leadership under the present semi-autonomous structure represents an important asset in its struggle for an expanded role and a greater place in the consciousness of Canadians. Full departmental status, in itself, would be unlikely to improve its prospects. It is important to add, however, that if the Government continues to place a high priority on the official aid effort and to increase its allocations for this purpose, the Agency may in future grow to the point where separate, yet prominent, representation in the Cabinet will be both practicable and, indeed, necessary.

124. A further possibility, which under present conditions might strengthen the CIDA voice at the political level would be the appointment of a junior minister subordinate to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Such a minister—possibly a Minister of State—would not normally sit in Cabinet, and the Secretary of State for External Affairs would usually speak for CIDA in that forum. The junior minister would add, however, to the political weight of CIDA in governmental circles and would permit expanded political representation, both in Canada and abroad.

125. The Subcommittee finds Mr. Strong's critique of the Crown corporation suggestion a convincing one. Direct accountability is an important principle, particularly where these substantial sums of public money are involved. Under the present system, CIDA is fully accountable to the Canadian Government which is, in turn,