

vinced that the more we can involve individual citizens in all aspects of government policy, the better will be the quality of government we shall have. A few minutes ago I spoke of the increased role we see for one Parliamentary committee. Well that is *only one committee and only one aspect* of the government's commitment to this policy.

There may be some of you here who are saying to yourselves: "oh sure, I've heard all this before." Well let me give you a concrete example of how we have already put these policy directions into effect.

Very early in my term of office I realized that the refugee situation in Southeast Asia demanded two different kinds of action. The first was on the political front. It was simply intolerable to the new government — as I am sure it was to the people of Canada — that the government of Vietnam was pursuing a deliberate policy to expel hundreds of thousands of its own citizens. You will remember that for years — all through their war with the United States — Canada kept up good relations with the Government in Hanoi. We did not take sides in that conflict. Our moderate position was well recognized and appreciated by Hanoi.

But in light of the policy of violation of human rights that has been recently followed by Vietnam we have cut off our aid programs to that country. I personally have spoken to representatives of that government in Ottawa and abroad emphasizing that the goodwill between our peoples is seriously jeopardized by their actions. At the Geneva conference on the refugee situation I called on all other governments to exert whatever pressure they could to deter the Vietnamese from their inhumane course. Canada's representations, along with those of several other countries, resulted in at least a temporary change in Vietnam's policies. The flow of boat people was stopped. Illegal departures have been checked. Making that kind of appeal in that kind of forum is something that only the government could do — though we could not have taken so strong a stand if we weren't certain of the support for it among the Canadian people.

The second kind of action that was called for was to provide a humanitarian response to the plight of these tragically uprooted people. They desperately need new homes. The countries to which they flee are overwhelmed by the problems that have been created, and cannot be expected to continue to give shelter to the refugees if they are not certain that other countries will open their doors for longterm resettlement. Countries like Canada have to provide a relief valve if we want to prevent hundreds of thousands more people from dying. There was absolutely no choice about Canada having to accept refugees for resettlement. At least there was no choice if we are going to be able to live with our consciences — and to me that means no choice.

But there was a choice as to how we were to do this. One way would have been for the government to just arbitrarily pick a figure and say we will bring in this number and look after them. But we knew that the distress of these refugees had touched the hearts of Canadians. We knew that thousands of people from coast to coast had already been looking for a way in which they, as private citizens, could help. So this is

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