

information at our last committee meetings was for CIDA project officers to telephone from countries like Kenya and other places to give us information, and to send us documented information on the mismanagement of CIDA's projects. Therefore I realize why the government does not want to reveal any of its documents.

The article continues:

Schools have been built in several hot countries along Canadian lines with few windows but plenty of electric lights.

"You know what happens?" said a CIDA man. "The hydro in these countries is a terrible price, so what happens is that the local government can't afford to use the building and it's wasted."

I should also like to read some other comments from CIDA staff members, such as the following:

"Ours is a terribly complicated agency. It requires people who know the whole range of subject matter in very sophisticated management."

That is exactly what we are trying to find out. If we have all the proper documentation, we can do a job in committee in regard to the CIDA operation and foreign aid. The staff member continued:

"Not only know it, but can implement it. But I can't see in our agency one single individual with that capacity. We have had them, but they have quit.

They have been hired only a very short time when they shrug their shoulders and say, 'Nobody wants to use any expertise. They all know better than I. I have been given no authority to implement things. I can't get decisions. To hell with you. I'll go somewhere else.'"

We have had reports from CIDA project officers that they are left stranded in countries; their telegrams are not answered; their letters are not answered. They do not know what to do or in which direction to go. This indicates more mismanagement within CIDA, and explains why we must have a complete examination of all these documents.

I quote again from staff comments:

"There are some projects where decisions have been made by a project officer who hadn't the slightest idea what he was doing when he put his name to a document which amended the project.

It's going to cost us our shirts and it's going to cost the countries involved their shirts, but they can't afford it like we can. There are errors based on sheer stupidity which are costing two, three, four million dollars.

There is a complete and appalling lack of leadership... I see a complete failure in the agency to develop younger people. God, some of these younger people have got an idealism.

We have grown up in an atmosphere of absolute amateurism. The only thing that has enabled the program to be as valuable as it is at the moment is the relatively small handful of people who by sheer work have got things done, if not as well as they should like.

I think the situation is getting worse, rather than better. The pity of the whole issue is that the senior levels of management don't themselves understand what is wrong."

It is a fair conjecture that all of these criticisms have not reached Gérin-Lajoie. His personal staff have a reputation for shielding him from such irritations.

Paul Gérin-Lajoie has been described as a man who loves humanity but dislikes people, according to a former top CIDA aide who once had regular contact with the... agency president.

It is said that many of the present 930 CIDA employees don't even know what their boss looks like in the flesh because he restricts internal office contact to the few.

I think it would be an excellent suggestion if some members of this new CIDA committee visited some of these CIDA projects to have a first hand look at what is going on, and to speak to these project officers.

### *Area Program Summaries*

I continue quoting:

Unlike all other deputies, Gérin-Lajoie does not make his home in Ottawa, preferring to commute to Montreal for weekends he is not travelling around the world.

The criticisms go on about the operation and its management, and we are hardly any the wiser. Had it not been for these project officers giving us this information in the last few months, we would know very little about the whole CIDA operation. I find it very strange that the government members want to conceal these documents. I think the Canadian people are entitled to full disclosure, and in order for this committee to work properly all these documents should be presented to the members for study.

● (1750)

**Mr. Claude-André Lachance (Lafontaine-Rosemont):** Madam Speaker, I should like to refer to my colleague who just talked, and I say it was rubbish what he said about Mr. Gerin-Lajoie—

**The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin):** The hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre (Mr. McKenzie) on a point of order.

**Mr. McKenzie:** On a point of order, Madam Speaker, I was quoting project officers' statements from a news report, and this news report has never been repudiated. If those statements were rubbish, the government or CIDA should have answered the news report.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Lachance:** Madam Speaker, the matter under consideration today has, in substance, made a lot of ink and saliva run on the floor of this House as well as in the newsrooms of the media. I said, in substance, because I feel there is no doubt about the motives of the mover of this motion who is seeking, through his demand to table the Area Program Summaries of CIDA, to disclose the contents of government documents, a subject that is recurring periodically during the sittings of the House.

In my opinion, today's motion is nothing more than a pretext and the procedure is not new. Besides, we have noticed in that last few months a notable outbreak of this procedural device to raise periodically the well closed lid.

Periodically is even a mild expression, since every occasion is a good one, even the most futile subjects, to question the cogency of the "confidentiality" of some government documents.

Yet the rules of the game are clear and to make them even more obvious, so as to leave no room for doubt about the general principle of confidentiality, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. MacEachen) in a speech on March 15, 1973, explained some guidelines and tabled the 16 recommendations the government can sometimes invoke to deny the production of confidential papers and reports of consultative committees. The statement followed a speech by one of our procedure experts in the House, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), who then gave the reasons why he thought the confidentiality principle should be changed so that every document would be considered public unless the government justified its wish to have the document considered confidential.