

*Development Assistance*

Members of Parliament to have serious debates about important questions.

Let me remind Hon. Members of what the Hon. Member's motion says. It reads:

That, in the opinion of this House, in the interest of Canadian security and world peace, the government should consider the advisability of transferring, on an annual basis, 1 per cent of its defence budget to Official Development Assistance, over and above the present expenditure, which would be made available only to those countries which decreased their military budgets by at least 1 per cent on an annual basis.

The strongest criticism levelled against this motion was that it was naive, well-intentioned and idealistic. It is incredible that my colleague has the effrontery to be idealistic. Can one imagine being idealistic in this place? Why did he not bring forward a motion that was cynical, manipulative and realistic? That would have found support on all sides of the House, I am sure.

Yes, of course the motion put by my colleague is idealistic. Rather than putting it down for that, why do we not acknowledge that the concepts in this motion are in fact prophetic, not in the sense of being unrealistic but in the sense of having a broader perspective on reality, of having a vision of the kind of global society in which we must live. If such a society is to come about, we must start taking steps in that direction now.

I would like to challenge Hon. Members who found fault with this motion to come up with alternative proposals that would do what this motion seeks to do. What does this motion seek to do? As I read it, it links official development assistance with defence spending and provides that we take some practical action in that area. It points out that the nations of this world spend far too much on military budgets relative to what is spent on human and economic development.

**Mr. Turner (Ottawa—Carleton):** A trillion dollars.

**Mr. Keeper:** Yes, a trillion dollars. As a result of underspending on human development, some 40,000 children die each day.

**Mr. McDermid:** Those are the countries that are spending the money. That is the point.

**Mr. Keeper:** Obviously my colleague across the way does not understand that there is a link between spending money on arms and spending it on development. Hon. Members across the way do not seem to appreciate that unless we as a planet stop putting all those trillions of dollars into swords and start putting them into ploughshares, we will not be able to do something about the fact that 40,000 children die each day. That is the central point of the motion.

In the absence of any other practical, or even cynical or manipulative motion that would take us in the direction of a world with a new set of priorities, this motion must be supported. For too long we have spent far too much on the world's military budget. We must shift that priority. We must

find ways to resolve conflicts between nations in a peaceful way rather than always relying on guns.

We cannot feed everyone, we cannot house everyone and we cannot provide the water that everyone on this planet needs without shifting our priorities. That is why defence spending should be linked to development spending. There is no way that we can continue to spend as much as we are spending now on military budgets and at the same time spend money on development. We must do both, and that means that we must find a new way of resolving problems and conflicts. This motion identifies that link and asks that we take action now. Until someone from any corner of this Chamber comes up with an alternative practical suggestion that we can support, let us support this motion. Let us do something.

**Mr. John McDermid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade):** Mr. Speaker, I have a number of things to say and, unfortunately, a very short period of time in which to say them.

I would like to thank the Hon. Member, whom I have known for some time, for bringing this idea forward. This is something we hear discussed quite often in our ridings, though perhaps not specifically in the way the Hon. Member has presented it in the motion.

How many times have we heard people in our ridings ask why we spend any money at all on foreign aid, why we do not spend it at home on the Indian situation or on housing in Canada? They ask why we should take care of anybody anywhere else in the world. I hear that quite often in my riding, and I do not think that my situation is unique.

People do not understand foreign aid and they may not understand defence either. However, I find it extremely difficult to link the budget of one with the budget of the other. I am not knocking his perception and his ideals. I know what he is trying to achieve. I just do not think this is the way to do it.

The countries that are spending humungus amounts of money on defence are not the countries we are trying to help. The big bucks are being spent by the big boys. The countries we want to help are being picked on by their neighbours and need defence budgets. I simply cannot see us giving aid only to countries that reduce their defence budgets in concert with ours. It simply will not work. It is not practical.

I would like to continue to talk about the various forms of aid Canada has been providing. We are spending \$2.5 billion in aid and \$10 billion in defence, so the ratio is four to one. Canada is not spending an exorbitant amount of money on defence as compared to aid. I simply do not think we can link the two. I do not think it is practical, but I certainly do not knock the objectives of the Hon. Member.