

Response of the Canadian International Development Agency to questions raised by Mr. Douglas Roche, Member for Edmonton South, during the meeting of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence on March 29, 1983.

Question 1

Why should Canadians support a 5 percent increase in ODA (Official Development Assistance) at a time when 1.6 million Canadians are out of work, when bankruptcies have increased to 10,765 in 1982?

The statement by the Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Allan J. MacEachen, which was tabled at the meeting of the Standing Committee on March 29, 1983, outlines the reasons for Canada's ODA programmes and the benefits to Canada, both immediate and long-term, both political and economic.

Humanitarian concerns are the traditional basis of public support for the Canadian aid programme. In one recent survey, for example, 49 percent of those polled indicated humanitarian reasons as the central basis for giving aid. Closely related to humanitarian motives for aid is the promotion of social justice. Canadian concerns with social justice and the amelioration of the living and working conditions of the poor in developing countries are particularly germane at the present time as developing countries hard hit by the world recession have faced tremendous difficulties in preventing the loss of hard-won gains in the areas of nutrition, health, education and employment.

In recent years there has been increased recognition that peace and stability in the world as a whole rests in considerable measure on peace and stability in developing countries. Adequate rates of economic growth and a suitable distribution of the fruits of economic progress, both of which are measurably affected by the level and quality of aid, play major roles in securing stable conditions in developing countries.

Also given the increasingly interdependent world economy, the economic interests of all countries require developing and expanding economies in the world. Efforts to promote self-sustaining growth in the developing countries will pay dividends in terms of the creation of markets for Canadian raw materials and manufactured goods, as well as the creation of additional sources of supply for tropical products and other goods not produced in Canada.