

Supply

There are glimmers that the government might yet have Canada play a more independent, more responsible and more useful role in the world. I hope that in the course of the minister's remarks today we may hear something positive and creative, particularly in light of the fact that we will be speaking at the United Nations Special Session on Disarmament on June 14.

• (1600)

Hon. Mark MacGuigan (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, at no time in our history has Canada's national principles and interests been so deeply engaged with the world around us. We often sense, with a terrible immediacy, events in the farthest corners of the globe. The international system developed in the post-war world needs constant repair and renovation if it is not to unravel. The interplay of political, economic, military and social changes is dizzying in its speed and dangerous in its potential consequences.

What do Canadians expect of their foreign policy in such a time? Foreign policy constantly embodies the views and principles of Canadians. It is the expression abroad of the nature of our country, of our deeply held values and of our national policies. This government believes that there are a number of principles which Canadians cherish and expect to see pursued at home and abroad. These principles were first laid out in the paper at the beginning of the 1970s and include the fostering of economic growth, the safeguarding of Canada's sovereignty and independence, working for global peace and security, promoting social justice, enhancing the quality of life and ensuring a harmonious natural environment. These are six values to which Canadians are deeply committed as a people in their life abroad as well as their life at home.

In the current period, economic growth and social justice are the priority goals of this government abroad as they are at home. Attention to peace and security and to the rule of international law is surely a fundamental pre-condition to prosperity and justice. The international environment at the present juncture is by no means congenial or conducive to the pursuit of peace and international co-operation. Perhaps the most troubling is the tendency toward persistent crises, toward a failure of mediation and the emergence of problems which spring up beyond the reach of national institutions; problems which slip through the international safety net and threaten violence and injustice.

Canadians expect their foreign policy to work for the good of this country but they also insist that it work for the good of the global community. They realize that Canada cannot pursue its goals in a world of instability. They demand of their foreign policy that Canada make a contribution to world order and harmony.

Canadians expect their foreign policy to address the perplexing issues of the day openly, directly and peacefully. They expect Canada to pull its weight in the world, for example by promoting the independence of Namibia, supporting the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, accepting refugees from oppression, countering the Soviet threat in alliance with traditional partners, working for economic progress in the

Caribbean and Central America or deepening our ties with francophone states.

It is against that background of priorities and principles that I now turn to the motion before us. I believe I am speaking on behalf of a middle power, a modest people, but a people with a strong sense of idealism not only for themselves but also for their world. Canadian foreign policy articulates and demonstrates the long-standing Canadian characteristics of moderation, reason and co-operation quickened by concern for our fellow man.

This party is in the mainstream of Canadian opinion with respect to international affairs. It is in the mainstream of western opinion. That cannot be said for either of the parties opposite.

Let us look at their position. Let us take Her Majesty's loyal opposition. Let me cite this incident which occurred at the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence on May 4. The mover of the motion for today's debate, the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Crosbie) and the official critic for his party in that field, attacked the government for not providing military assistance to Britain in the conflict over the Falkland Islands. In the same meeting his Conservative colleague, the hon. member for Fraser Valley West (Mr. Wenman), told the committee, "I want some compromise. I want you"—speaking to me—"identifying the nature of the compromise and getting on to that."

One could speak volumes about the confusion that exists in the ranks of the official opposition with respect to foreign policy. One wonders where the members of that party are today. For instance, I had hoped to hear the hon. member for York-Peel (Mr. Stevens) speak of the views of the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) on the election in El Salvador. It would have been most enlightening for the country to find out where the Conservative Party stands. It would have been interesting to hear the hon. member for York North (Mr. Gamble)—and perhaps we will—speak of the views on social justice of the hon. member for Edmonton South (Mr. Roche), who knows that I agree with his position but also knows that he unfortunately does not have the support of his own party. It would be interesting to hear the views of the hon. member for Waterloo (Mr. McLean) on the disarmament theories of the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. McKinnon). That would be a treat.

Let me give another case in point relating to the hon. member for St. John's West who is, for the moment, the official critic for his party. When asked about the actions of the brief Tory government over the invasion of Afghanistan, this hon. member—obviously stretched to the limits of his understanding of foreign policy—told startled journalists that the Soviet Union had been invited into Afghanistan. Not only is that hon. member not in the mainstream of Canadian public opinion, not in the mainstream of western public opinion, but he is not even in the mainstream of world public opinion, because 105 nations at the United Nations voted against the Soviet invasion of—not invitation to—Afghanistan. It would