

Motions

The Government says that it wants to pay attention to the human rights situations in recipient countries, and that where there are gross violations it will continue to monitor the situation, and if the violations are persistent then those countries will not receive bilateral aid. However, it does not want to open up the process so that the Canadian people and Parliament will see what the Government is doing.

When we travelled across Canada, and I am sure all members of the committee will back me up on this, we heard many organizations indicating that they were very concerned about this whole question of human rights, and these organizations came from all sides of the political spectrum. It is not a question of left or right, it is a question of the Canadian people being very concerned that our aid money should not be used to prop up Governments that are persistent violators of human rights and in fact that we are in a situation where—

Mr. Lewis: El Salvador.

Mr. Manly: The Hon. Minister mentions El Salvador. I presume he has read the editorial in this morning's *Globe and Mail* which points out the continuing violations of human rights in El Salvador. The Government moved to give El Salvador \$8 million worth of development assistance a couple of years ago against the advice of people who have worked there and know of the kind of persistent and gross violations of human rights that take place there.

The Government does not want to be up front with its concerns about human rights. It says it wants to handle these concerns from some back room in External Affairs, without coming clean and saying to the Canadian people what it really believes about human rights.

I think the Canadian people want to know where the Government stands, what its criteria are for determining human rights violations, and they want to see a much more clearly established link between development assistance and the human rights records of the recipient countries.

• (1610)

Mr. Heap: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the background that the Hon. Member gave in his response to my question. I would like to ask a more specific question about the first recommendation of the committee, that emergency humanitarian aid continue to be given on compassionate grounds without preconditions but that it be monitored closely to prevent abuses.

Some people see a contradiction in that sentence. How do you prevent abuses if you are giving aid without preconditions? Monitoring may not have any effect one way or the other. If you monitor and find violations of human rights or monitor and find no violations of human rights, the reports would be of concern to a lot of people.

Would the Hon. Member comment on how such reports would be applied, if not in a sort of punitive way, which is considered to be ruled out by saying "without preconditions"?

Apart from saying that we do not like the moral conduct of government x, what may be a ground for saying that we would discontinue giving aid to government x? I am speaking, of course, of bilateral aid.

Mr. Manly: Mr. Speaker, it is important to distinguish between long-term development assistance and emergency humanitarian relief. We believe very strongly, and I think anyone involved in development would agree, that long-term development cannot take place in a system where there is repression and gross and systematic violation of human rights, because the two are contradictory. However, there are countries which have extremely poor human rights records, such as Ethiopia, which are also faced with dire emergencies. In the case of Ethiopia millions of people are at risk. We are talking here about providing emergency relief assistance and monitoring it to ensure that it goes to the people for whom it is intended. When assistance was given to Ethiopia during the 1984-85 famine crisis there was extensive monitoring by people involved in delivering that emergency assistance to ensure that it got through to the people for whom it was intended. Canadians can be assured that that was indeed the case. That is the kind of situation toward which our recommendation is directed.

Hon. Doug Lewis (Minister of State and Minister of State (Treasury Board)): Mr. Speaker, I do not rise with any joy to participate in this concurrence debate. The Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade put much time and effort into its report "For Whose Benefit?" on Canada's official development assistance policies and programs. We take the position that when a committee spends a great deal of time and effort and a great deal of the taxpayers' money to make and submit a report, and the Government goes to the effort of replying to that report, debate on it should be informed debate after all parties have been given notice and have had an opportunity to prepare themselves.

The House will know that the Government gave notice today of its intention to deal with the Royal Canadian Mint Act, which we thought would be dealt with very quickly, and then with a very important Bill which would benefit the Province of Nova Scotia.

My colleague purports, with pious unctuousness, to support the efforts of External Affairs in development assistance around the world. He supports a regime in one of the South American countries where there is no democratic use of radio and many other abuses. I am surprised that he would raise this issue in the House for debate without any notice to his colleagues in the House, without any effort to have an informed debate—

Mr. Manly: Mr. Speaker, on a point of order.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands (Mr. Manly) on a point of order.