

International Economic Conference

countries which, it seems to me, is perfectly justified in wanting a guarantee on the purchasing power of exports. They find the value of the things they have to sell going down so they have to sell more and more sugar, copra and other raw materials in order to buy the same amount of manufactured goods and things that are essential for modern technology.

The industrialized nations find it very convenient at certain times to enter into commodity arrangements with one another. One of the commodity arrangements from which Canadians gained a good deal of benefit was the International Wheat Agreement, which unfortunately was scuttled. It guaranteed producers a fair price and it guaranteed the consumer countries a ceiling; the selling price fluctuated between those two levels and it was beneficial to both.

Over the last 15 years some of us have been urging the Canadian government to enter into a sugar agreement which would be of great benefit to Caribbean nations. When it was first suggested we were told the price of sugar was so high that it was a bad time to enter into an agreement with sugar producing countries; when the price dropped to 4-cents per pound we were told it was a bad time for an agreement because we could buy sugar much more cheaply than the floor price.

The fact is that we are now paying the price of the failure of the industrialized countries, including Canada, to investigate and proceed with commodity agreements and arrangements which would give to the developing countries at least a guaranteed minimum price for their products and would have some relationship to the cost of things they must buy from the industrialized nations.

The same is true with reference to debt. Of course I am glad, as all Canadians are, that the Canadian government decided to cancel \$254 million worth of debt of the developing countries, but this is a drop in the bucket compared to the real problem. I have seen figures which show that in some of the developing countries the amount of charges on their existing international debt is now greater than the foreign aid they receive. It may well be that if the industrialized countries want to establish a working relationship with the developing countries, a great deal more of this debt will have to be wiped out. I do not say this in criticism of the minister; the minister could not control the policies of the industrialized nations. I think the western powers will have to recognize, however, that we are now paying the price of nearly 200 years of economic imperialism and that the developing countries still justifiably feel that they are being exploited by the industrialized nations.

I have the feeling that the proposals which were placed before this conference by the industrialized nations can be summed up in a simple phrase "too little too late" because we are working against time in trying to establish a suitable relationship between the north and the south.

● (1530)

I am sure all members are disappointed, as the minister is, by the failure on the part of OPEC countries to agree to a continuation of the dialogue. Frankly, the world is heading for

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands)]

a disastrous situation in energy, particularly with respect to oil. By 1990 a great part of the western world will depend largely on oil from OPEC countries, and by the end of the century Saudi Arabia will probably be the only country left with oil for export. The danger is that in endeavouring to protect themselves against the possibility of curtailment of oil supplies, the highly developed nations will turn in on themselves and resort to measures which can only lead to further conflict and misunderstanding.

The minister said the conference has finished and its work will be carried on by other international organizations. That troubles me, for all these international organizations operate within their own limited parameters. The Conference on International Economic Co-Operation was valuable precisely because it took an over-all view and tried to make governments face the central problem, the widening gap between the incomes of the wealthy and the poorer nations of the world. I hope these other international organizations apply themselves to this task but am not optimistic about it.

I congratulate the minister on his contribution. If the conference was not the success he hoped it would be, it is not his fault. He made a genuine contribution and a worth while effort.

In closing I urge him, and the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson), to do everything possible to make sure there is an ongoing dialogue between the rich and poor nations of the world. I say this, not from any ideology, but because we recognize that the maldistribution of income in the world can only lead to international conflict, and ongoing dialogue is not so much a matter of choice as a matter of human survival.

[*Translation*]

Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Social Credit Party of Canada, I wish to congratulate the minister for having completed his long and hard task, considering that the conference has lasted over eighteen months. Today he gave us his views on the work carried out and the limited success obtained but he stated at the same time that he was disappointed by that conference. Mr. Speaker, I think that if the minister seems disappointed today it is quite natural when two worlds meet, that is the underdeveloped and industrialized countries, it is evident that from the outset the latter will feel inferior and so quite suspicious.

When we read the minister's report this is what stands out from those debates. The minister referred to confrontations. I think that this is quite normal and even human since there are confrontations even between industrialized countries or members of the same government. We all recall that public confrontations took place in 1975 when Mr. Turner publicly held in check Mr. Gérin-Lajoie's decisions when the latter was president of CIDA. I believe such confrontations are necessary but they must be used to tackle problems in a spirit of co-operation, that is in a frank dialogue, and once in a while one should try to put oneself in the place of the other.