

of international media interest during October and November. Intense news coverage of starving Ethiopians produced an outpouring of Western expressions of concern and increased efforts at providing food assistance. Canada was among the leaders of those countries offering food and financial aid to Ethiopia. In a press conference November 1, External Affairs Minister Joe Clark outlined the methods by which Canada might contribute to alleviating the suffering from the effects of widespread famine (External Affairs transcript, November 5). Canadian concern, said Mr. Clark, was "deep, widespread and genuine," and the country would endeavor to play an effective role in relief efforts. In order to combine the efforts of individuals, NGOs and the government into a more cohesive and effective program, the federal government appointed an Emergency Coordinator for African Relief, David MacDonald, a former Conservative Cabinet Minister. At the press conference, Mr. Clark announced that because of the urgency of the situation, he and International Relations Minister Monique Vézina would visit Ethiopia upon their return from the Gandhi funeral in India.

The trip was designed as an opportunity to meet with officials and relief organizations in order to determine whether Canadian aid to Ethiopia was "being delivered as effectively as possible to the people who are suffering." The purpose for the visit was threefold, said Mr. Clark: to gain "direct personal understanding" of the problems of effective aid delivery; to demonstrate to the Ethiopian government the determination of Canada that its assistance reached those in need; and to provide Canadians, through Mr. MacDonald, with a centre for the "coordination and thrust" of relief activities.

During a CTV television interview November 4, Mr. Clark stated that the NGOs operating in Ethiopia had indicated an appreciation of the "seriousness" with which Ethiopian authorities were treating delivery problems. While discussions had centred primarily on the "immediate problem of famine," they had also taken into consideration the underlying "roots of the problem." Mr. Clark said that his experience in Ethiopia had given him increased "personal" confidence in the ability of in-place mechanisms (both governmental and NGO) to coordinate and deliver supplies. Mr. Clark anticipated more food (and other) aid, and the creation of longer-term programs for the prevention of similar crises in future. While admitting that the Ethiopian authorities were experiencing difficulties in distributing accumulated food donations, Mr. Clark added that the "will of the government" was directed toward resolving the problems of maintaining a workable system of delivery (External Affairs transcript, November 6).

Former Agriculture Minister Eugene Whelan criticized the Liberal Government for failing to act on his recommendations for greater food aid efforts on the part of Canada, after he returned from a fact-finding mission to Ethiopia last year in his capacity as World Food Council President. Mr. Whelan told reporters that his observations had led him to believe that Canada should spearhead an international effort by the developed countries to avert such a famine crisis as was now affecting Ethiopia. He had proposed a \$20 million assistance scheme which, he said, might have diminished the number of Ethiopians suffering

from malnutrition and starvation. "It should have been done months ago," he added (*Globe and Mail, The Citizen*, November 5). While his proposals for assisting Ethiopia to improve its farming methods to the point of self-sufficiency had been rejected at the time, Mr. Whelan stressed that Canada was among the forefront of those nations contributing aid. "If all the other developed countries participated as much as Canada has, we wouldn't see the starvation . . . happening in Ethiopia today," he said. Mr. Whelan contacted External Affairs Minister Joe Clark to discuss the possibility of resurrecting the emergency aid plan, or something of a similar magnitude. Mr. Whelan suggested the possibility of utilizing Canadian troops stationed in Europe for the transportation of food and medical supplies to the more remote sections of the Ethiopian interior.

Interviewed on CBC radio November 5, Oxfam spokesman David Gallagher agreed with Mr. Whelan's assessment that getting the emergency nature of the problem across to the "official parts of the Canadian structure" had been difficult. Mr. Gallagher stated that despite European reports of non-deliverance of food supplies and the possibility of the Ethiopian army's being fed with donated food, Ethiopian government reassurances and a lack of clearly documented proof had led the western governments (including that of Canada) to conclude that efforts were being handled effectively. He added that recently, great strides had been made in raising the consciousness of both the public and government and NGO officials as to the magnitude of the crisis. Mr. Gallagher pointed out the dichotomy of Ethiopia, wherein food supplies were being delivered in government controlled areas with constructive "activity," while the rebel-controlled areas (Tegre and Eritrea) presented problems for delivering more than "a trickle." Admitting that Canadians "responded very well over the long haul," Mr. Gallagher called upon Canada to respond in an "informed" and active way. Emergency relief, he added, must reach the relatively neglected rebel-held areas, and for this reason an "international commission" under the direction of Willy Brandt (Socialist International head) might provide a possible means of developing a cease-fire between the warring factions (External Affairs transcript, November 5).

In a scrum November 5 External Affairs Minister Joe Clark reviewed some of his observations gathered in Ethiopia. He stated that his purpose had been to ascertain the ability of the "Ethiopian government and the non-governmental organizations there to deliver Canadian aid." Finding that the distribution system was "relatively effective given the circumstances," Mr. Clark said that the next step would be to determine what steps should be taken by the Canadian government, NGOs and individuals. After consultations with NGO representatives, the Ethiopian head of government Mengistu Haile Mariam, and various ministers, Mr. Clark said he was convinced that "aid was reaching its destination." With the catalyst of media coverage, especially television, said Mr. Clark, the world had been made aware of the dimensions of the "human tragedy," and he felt justified in calling for Canadians to contribute to aid projects (External Affairs transcript, November 6). Mr. Clark also noted that Ethiopian officials had requested that Canada act as "a bridge to the prosperous countries" to