

*International Relations*

Brandt commission observed, for some time in the developed world, including Canada, the air has been thick with alibis and it has been rife with rhetoric. Now is the time to act.

It has been six years since the Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) impressive Mansion House speech and seven years since the Prime Minister proclaimed that if Canada's presence in the world were to be judged by a single criterion, it should be Canada's humanism, its pursuit of social justice. If concrete actions and specific commitments are not made, and soon, there is the danger of our Canadian statements expounding social justice having a very hollow ring to them. That danger may not be far off. Witness the Brazilian newspaper which, in January of this year, speculated that the Prime Minister's stop in Brazil was nothing more than a mutual publicity stunt on the part of the Brazilian and Canadian governments. For despite impressive advances in the early 1970s, Canada's aid is now down to .43 per cent of its GNP, a far cry from the low .7 per cent suggested by the Pearson commission and a long way off the 1 per cent allocation proposed by the Parliamentary Task Force on North-South Relations.

I am reminded of a newspaper article in January which discussed the Prime Minister's world tour and which reads in part:

Like a nineteenth-Century Russian nobleman in one of Chekhov's classics, Mr. Trudeau had the cosmos on his mind; poverty and affluence; violence and disorder; tradition and change; the future of the human condition. He discussed these worthy subjects in lofty, sometimes philosophical, often moralistic ways, but ultimately he failed to put much effort behind answering the question, "What is to be done?"

We know of the Prime Minister's fondness for abstractions. We were treated to the famous hexagon in the foreign policy review, the six policy themes, which were to provide the framework for Canadian foreign policy but which were so general as to offer no guidelines for policymakers. We have seen major initiatives, such as the third option and the contractual link fizzle and die.

North-South relations now is the issue and the government has promised that it will pursue an active role in fostering a constructive dialogue with developing countries. Mention was made in the government's report of Canada undertaking a bridge-building role, which is most praiseworthy and marks a welcome departure from the Prime Minister's attitude in the foreign policy review period during which the government's handbook entitled "Foreign Policy for Canadians" held that the opportunity to pursue sensible policies, one firmly anchored in domestic concerns, had been squandered in the quest for roles, influence for its own sake, and international applause.

That was not true of Pearsonian diplomacy and I hope that it will not be the case today. I support a bridge-building role for Canada and can see the potential for Canadian leadership in North-South relations. But, as I said, the time has now come to act.

I share the Brandt commission's premise that mankind wants to survive and that mankind has a moral obligation to survive. It is imperative that we, as citizens of the world, work

to overcome the tragedy of world hunger, mass misery and the gross inequalities which exist between rich and poor. However, rather than succumb to the intellectual vice of oversimplicity and rather than rely on abstract concepts, such as the quality of life and international social justice, laudable though they may be, the time has come for a strategy which focuses on a concrete specification of human needs, a strategy which is specific in terms of attempting to channel particular resources to particular groups in particular ways.

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The facts and statistics, such as the figure of 800 million destitute people on this earth, are striking and alarming, but they seem all too unreal and for some reason fail to spark a groundswell of public support for international development, particularly when Canadians themselves are facing varying degrees of economic hardship. It is important to realize that development means very simple and basic things; enough food, a job, somewhere to live, a future for one's children, some basic security. Cast in these terms, development becomes understandable and nowhere is development more sorely needed than in the Third World and in countries like El Salvador, which are beset by many problems. In light of the civil war in El Salvador, one should make the point that development which does not touch the majority of the people is not development at all. It is our moral duty and it is in our interest to eradicate the suffering in the Third World.

I believe, and I am not alone, that we need a comprehensive, multidisciplinary, sectoral development approach, the vanguard of which should be population policies. Population seems to have been a forgotten factor in the work of the Parliamentary Task Force on North-South Relations, and it is not addressed in the government's response to the task force report tabled yesterday. This omission is a most significant and unfortunate oversight, deliberate or otherwise.

Since the Bucharest Conference on Population in 1974, most countries have come to recognize that population and development are inextricably bound together. Just as no population program should be considered in isolation from policies and plans on such issues as health, housing, education, employment, the environment and the use of resources, so too must all development projects incorporate a population component. This conclusion was reached unanimously by parliamentarians from 58 national parliaments at the Colombo conference in 1979, which included four Canadian representatives, and this view was adopted unanimously at the subsequent meeting in Caracas of the Interparliamentary Union where 82 countries participated.

Moreover, the Brandt commission report, which appears to have served as a guide for the parliamentary task force, devoted a chapter to population issues and strongly emphasized their importance in any effective over-all international development strategy. Further, the need for population policies is recognized worldwide and many committees on population and development formed by parliamentarians in Canada,