

and other countries are wondering whether they ought to expect less assistance?

[English]

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the Government of Canada, under the government of different Parties, has a proud record of contributing to overseas development assistance. It is the intention of this Government to maintain that record.

When my colleague, the Minister of Finance, made his statement in this House on Thursday night, he made very clear the commitment of this country to continuing our steady progress toward .07 per cent of GNP for overseas development assistance. Because of the severe economic situation which the Government has inherited, we have been forced to stretch out that commitment to a longer time frame. However, we are meeting the obligations of Canada, and we will retain a position of respect and leadership for Canada by contributing to development and by contributing to relief of disaster where it occurs.

AMOUNT OF FUNDING

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, how can the Right Hon. Secretary of State for External Affairs stand today and make that statement when, on September 25, at the United Nations, speaking on behalf of the Government and all of the people of Canada, he made the solemn promise that we would keep our goal of .07 per cent of GNP for overseas development assistance by 1990 a few weeks later it was postponed to 1995, and two weeks later the programs of aid for the developing nations were cut by almost \$200 million? Do you not think, Mr. Speaker, that the credibility of the Canadian Government has been determined by this inability of the new Government to say the same thing inside Canada as it does outside Canada?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, one of the reasons this Government enjoys much more credibility than the Government with which the Hon. Member was associated is precisely that we do say the same thing outside Canada as we do inside Canada.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[Translation]

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): And it is our intention . . . And we have shown that we always say the same thing in French and in English.

[English]

What I said at the United Nations was that the Government intends to achieve its level of support by 1990. That was our intention at that time when we had that state of knowledge of the finances of the country. We did not know then just how serious was the fiscal problem in which the former Government had placed this country. For that reason we used guarded language then, and we repeated in the statement of my colleague, the Hon. Minister of Finance, a clear commitment

to maintain Canada's steady progress. I would remind the House that Canadian overseas development aid is going up, not down.

● (1420)

AID FOR CENTRAL AMERICA

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, the Right Hon. Member says that he knows what he is talking about. He made a commitment to the UN on behalf of the Government on September 25. Three weeks later he backed away from that commitment because he has no clout in his Government. If the Government is about to cut \$200 million in aid, I would like to know if it is the intention of the Government to continue to cut aid. The Minister indicated last week that the Government would increase aid to Africa because of the famine. Is it the intention of the Government to cut aid to Latin America at a time when a major crisis is developing in Nicaragua? Is it not the view of the Minister that he would have been well advised to follow more closely—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. With great respect to the Hon. Member, I heard his supplementary question and I do not think that it is fair for two questions to be included in a third supplementary.

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would make the point that the Overseas Development Assistance budget has not been cut; it has been increased. It will be more this year than last year.

With respect to Nicaragua, this morning I had the opportunity of meeting with the Hon. Member for Spadina who has recently returned from that country. We discussed an aid program for Nicaragua, which the Government is examining. Two or three weeks ago I had the honour of signing a \$7.5 million Canadian aid program which will help to ensure potable water supplies in Nicaragua. We are meeting Canada's obligations around the world, and we intend to continue to do so.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[Translation]

RESEARCH

ANNOUNCED BUDGETARY CUTS—QUEBEC REGION

Mr. Raymond Garneau (Laval-des-Rapides): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the President of the Treasury Board.

Cities in central Quebec are probably those most severely affected by the budget cuts announced by the Minister of Finance, and I am thinking of research laboratories in Victoriaville, Trois-Rivières and Shawinigan. Could the Minister inform the House what will happen to the Institut de recherche Maurice-Lamontagne in the Lower St. Lawrence area and