

But there are a number of other constraints upon CIDA's effectiveness that are under Canadian control, not always within CIDA, not only within the Federal Government, but certainly within Canadian society as a whole. Concentration of our bilateral assistance programs on fewer countries, for example, could scale down the administrative complexities to which I have just referred; so could a higher degree of specialization in the types of projects we undertake to finance, procure and manage.

Once this process of concentration and specialization is under way in CIDA -- and it can only be gradual --, other federal departments and provincial agencies will be in a better position to plan ahead in order to meet the personnel and material requirements of our assistance programs. For CIDA has also been hampered in recent years by shortages of trained technicians, project managers, equipment, expertise and other "inputs" in Canada itself. I would hope also that, with better information, Canadians will become less reluctant to serve abroad, that more of them will acquire the special skills -- such as proficiency in foreign languages -- that are needed in developing countries. Of course health conditions, climate, cultural differences and political instability will always place strains upon Canadians working abroad on CIDA projects, and upon their families. But we shall continue to improve accommodation and living conditions in their countries of assignment.

I conclude on a note of caution. This Committee should scrutinize CIDA's operations as much as it feels necessary, but it should neither demand nor expect more from developing countries than from Canada itself.

History tells us that development in Canada, as in most other industrialized countries, has been a messy process, riddled with inefficiencies and even waste, marred by abuses and controversies. In the 1840s, what was then the Union Government of the two Canadas invested massively in canals, in the hope that the St. Lawrence Valley would become the outlet to the sea for the bustling American Midwest. It did not work, partly because the Americans preferred New York and partly because the railways became the dominant mode of transport. It took Canadians just about 100 years to make the St. Lawrence Seaway a sound venture.

Then, in the 1860s and 1870s, the otherwise development-oriented government of the new confederation allowed the Maritime and Eastern Quebec economies to collapse when shipping went from sail to steam. We are still paying today the economic and social costs of that action. Then, from Confederation to the First World War, we invested excessively and haphazardly in railways so that,