

Adjournment Debate

CAGPL has said that lenders would be reluctant to commit themselves unless they could be assured with reasonable certainty that the project would, in fact, be completed and that its operation would not be susceptible to frequent or prolonged interruption. In their submissions to the National Energy Board CAGPL has made clear that their financing plans include a 25 per cent contingency allowance, to provide for cost overruns or cash shortfalls from operations. Even so, CAGPL maintains that potential lenders—mutual funds, trust companies and institutions—might not be prepared to bear the full risks of proceeding, and it is in this connection that the possibility of government completion guarantees have been raised.

CAGPL has raised the matter informally with several government departments. No application or request for government assistance as to either form of guarantee to which the minister referred has been made and there has been no commitment from the federal government. Certainly, it would be premature to consider guarantees until the NEB and Berger reports had been considered, the make-up of the successful consortium was known, and the implications of financial involvement had been studied in detail. Assistance could only be considered in the last resort if a pipeline were deemed to be of vital national interest and demonstrably incapable of a private financing.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—CONFERENCE ON INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION—REQUEST FOR PROGRESS REPORT

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, some time ago I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) if he would keep the House better informed about the progress which is being made at the North-South Conference, particularly on the issues of commodity price stabilization and special drawing rights, the core issues in the building of peace, the very issues he himself introduced in his speech in Washington.

I made that request of the Prime Minister because of the very strong statement made by Robert McNamara, President of the World Bank, to the effect that the North-South Conference, otherwise known as the Continuing Conference on International Economic Co-operation, was in danger of foundering because the industrialized nations had not yet come to grips with the real issues. I am making my appeal tonight for a better flow of information to the Canadian people as a means of sustaining the policies which have been arrived at now, in the latest development, at the London summit conference which took place over the week end.

What we are talking about here is not just a question of aid to the developing nations. We have long since given up that band-aid approach. We are talking about substantive issues which are at the heart of the reasons underlying world poverty. We are talking particularly about institutional changes which

[Mr. Kaplan.]

would bring about, for example, a commodity fund for the 18 principal commodities produced by the developing world, as well as the establishment of some mechanism to repair the tremendous damage which is being done to developing nations in consequence of their debt position. The debt of the developing nations now totals \$165 billion. The crisis of debt together with the need for a commodity fund is at the heart of the North-South Conference to which the Prime Minister referred in his Washington speech.

Now the London summit meeting has taken place I suggest to the House that, despite the little attention which has been given to it by representatives of the government here, both in the House and in the media, a break-through has been made over the week end which brings a new ray of hope for the North-South Conference which will be concluding its present round of business at the end of this month in Paris. I make this statement because, going through the communiqué which was issued by the seven leaders of the industrialized countries, I see such statements as these—I will quote a couple of them from the communiqué. They read as follows:

● (2220)

We are agreed to do all in our power to achieve a successful conclusion of the CIEC (Conference on International Economic Co-operation) and we commit ourselves to a continued constructive dialogue with developing countries.

We aim to increase the flow of aid and other real resources to those countries. We invite the Comcon countries to do the same . . . the message of the Downing Street summit is thus one of confidence: in the continuing strength of our societies and the proven democratic principles that give them vitality; that we are undertaking the measures needed to overcome problems and achieve a more prosperous future.

Not only have they given us just rhetoric, but there is a commitment to continuing the movement toward a common fund.

There are those who are interpreting the communiqué as a significant step forward in establishing linkages between the prices of commodities that are exported to the developing world and what has to be imported in the way of manufactured goods from the west. I will quote again one or two sentences that lend some hope to this positive interpretation of the communiqué when they say:

We will provide strong political leadership to expand opportunities for trade to strengthen the open international trading system, which will increase job opportunities.

We reject protectionism—it would foster unemployment, increase inflation and undermine the welfare of our peoples.

That is what took place over the week end, and I suggest that the influence of President Carter has been very notable in the changed attitude of the Americans who are the swing country in the industrialized world in all the negotiations that take place in international forums today.

We have to ask ourselves this question: are we only talking about rhetoric, or are there some substantial gains being made, because we have to keep in mind the admonition from that