

dations today the New Democratic Party joins with us—and we join with it—in calling for that type of consultation.

Second, there should be international action through the United Nations or other appropriate international agencies. If we cannot understand El Salvador—the question comes quite clearly into focus—how will we understand the complexities of the North-South dialogue, about which we have been talking so much and of which El Salvador becomes a case in point?

Let us think about that case in point for a moment. El Salvador has a population of 4.5 million to 5 million. That population is getting smaller each day, as the leader of the New Democratic Party has so graphically and brutally described. There are 207 people per square kilometre living on the land. The gross domestic product of the El Salvadorean economy is \$3 billion U.S. a year, or \$679 per capita per year. With respect to health care, there are 603 persons for each hospital bed and about 3,685 persons per doctor.

When we begin to look at the capacity for stability, we must realize that 3.6 per cent of the gross national product is spent on education. Only 65 per cent of those eligible make grade one. There is an illiteracy rate of 35 per cent. This means that less than one third of the population is economically active. The export ratio is marginally above imports. Food production has lagged far behind industrial productivity over the last ten years. This is the legacy of El Salvador. This is the background of stability into which we hope to integrate our lives as part of this global community.

We hear and agree with the rhetoric of the Prime Minister, but we find ourselves strangely uneasy because over these many years of Liberal government we have heard the same tune, but we have seen contributions to the ODA drop. We have seen opportunities lost again and again. The ball has been dropped when Canada could have continued the Pearsonian tradition of involvement and leadership.

We hear rhetoric from the government benches about the possibility for elections in today's world, but we are hearing from people who have a lack of sensitivity about legitimate struggle. As one who has lived through a period of civil war inside a country such as El Salvador, I know how little freedom there is, how little opportunity there is to speak and what great risk is involved in speaking, let alone standing for office or voting. If there are democratic elections, are there to be corpses voting?

When we begin to look at proposals and at what might be done, let us suggest that the government take strong initiatives to inform itself and to inform hon. members on all sides of the House. We are indebted to the leader of the New Democratic Party for his risk-taking. We are grateful for his interpretation. But because of party backgrounds there will be those who will be suspicious of the comments of the leader of the New Democratic Party. They may feel that the press has not been accurate or that the church has not been accurate. Why do we not send from this House those who will go and enter into discussion? Why do we not take the skeptics along with those who are already convinced?

### *International Relations*

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McLean:** I hope to propose that the subcommittee on Canada's relations with Latin America and the Caribbean, which is now at work, travels, even if it be in neighbouring countries, and begins to have the same conversations as the leader of the New Democratic Party has had, as churchmen have had, and as representatives of voluntary agencies have had, and then comes back and reports to us.

In case there are those who feel that this cannot be done because of security, about which we hear often from the government, let me inform this House that there will be a delegation from all parties of the Parliament of Europe—Social Democrats, Christian Democrats and all parties of the right and left in that House—which will travel to El Salvador, to Mexico City and to Costa Rica in order themselves, as a parliamentary committee, to hear people there. They will travel from June 22 to July 3.

Second, let us explore with Mexico, Europe and, by all means, with the United States—in the context of the minister's comment about the government's considering the invitation—taking part in working with these groups to find suitable joint action.

Third, in order to be helpful in El Salvador we need to affirm—and we need to hear clearly from the government—that El Salvador, Central America and Latin America are a part of the Canadian sphere of interest, that anywhere in the world where human rights are violated is an area of the Canadian sphere of influence.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. McLean:** Let me touch on a matter which the Secretary of State for External Affairs mentioned. I refer to the matter of refugees. In *Newsweek* of June 15 there is a report on our world's newest refugees. The report reads in part as follows:

Perhaps 2,000 a week pull up stakes, according to social workers in the capital city of San Salvador, many heading north immediately on the bone-jarring bus journey through Guatemala and Mexico to the U.S. border. No one knows how many have made it, but estimates start at 60,000.

● (1650)

The article concludes:

—the flow of illegal aliens from El Salvador is certain to continue until peace comes to that war-weary country.

Canada has a proud tradition, one in which this party when in government gave leadership, and others on all sides of this House have supported. When the Southeast Asian refugees were here we had an experience of learning what hurt there was and what needs there are, not only of welcoming but also of beginning to go and look at the root causes towards which we need to address more thought and effort. Is it not time that Canada, in the United Nations forum, began to take an active role in calling for the overhaul of the U.N. covenant on refugees in order that there can be an effective framework, not one of the 1950s but one of the 1980s, in terms of dealing with these most unfortunate people caught in large part in wars about which they know little?