

External Affairs

These people, the same as we do, have the desire to live; but they are condemned to die. And yet we sit here in this western world, particularly in this thrice-blessed Canada, where the hungry can see huge surpluses of food, and where they can see our selfishness. I am quite sure that this is not the sort of policy which is going to bring them to our side.

On November 15, 1950, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, speaking before the Windsor chamber of commerce and the Windsor United Nations Association said this:

Starvation and distress have provided the climate in which the infection of Marxist communism could take hold. There can be no continuing tranquility in Asia until a start has been made in improving the well-being of its people. Food, shelter and clothing—these must be supplied at least in minimum quantities before there can be political stability. In this task help will be needed from countries in the West.

I am sure the minister was applauded when he made that announcement. He knows what the facts are, but he has not yet been able to communicate to the cabinet, of which he is a member, just how serious they are, from the point of view of our security. Then again, in the House of Commons, on October 22, 1951, the Secretary of State for External Affairs said:

Aggression is not the only enemy in Korea. There is the enemy of hunger, poverty and misery, the source and the strength of that communism which the Russians have used in other countries for their own unworthy purposes.

And yet, profoundly true as is that statement, what is our contribution in that fight? Well, on the basis of last year's figures it is about three per cent of the funds which are being subscribed for rehabilitation in Korea.

Speaking to the annual congress of the Co-operative Union of Canada, at Ottawa, the minister said on March 4, 1952:

The basic problem of most of the peoples of Asia, however, does not concern the standard of living but how to maintain life itself. Nearly a thousand million Asians are trying to exist on a diet amounting to only 80 per cent of the pre-war level—the level of the "hungry East".

The minister knows the facts. Yet today these people are worse off than ever before, while at the same time we have more food surpluses than ever in the history of this country. And in North America we continue to pile up these huge surpluses.

Then on March 25, 1952 the then parliamentary assistant to the minister, the hon. member for Montmagny-L'Islet (Mr. Lesage), uttered three most pregnant sentences when he said:

We must acknowledge that there exist today hundreds of millions of human beings, especially in

[Mr. Stewart (Winnipeg North).]

Asia and Africa, whose living conditions are not only deplorable; they are intolerable. It is imperative that we help to remedy this state of affairs. Otherwise, the democratic world will remain at the mercy of a real enmity kindled for political ends in these peoples who are starving for bread and enlightenment.

The then parliamentary assistant, who is now a minister in the government, never spoke truer words in his life. Yet, what is being done about it?

On several occasions in the house I have risen and spoken about United States foreign policy, because what the United States does can have a tremendous impact upon Canada. Where United States foreign policy was conceivably dangerous, we have said so. But I have never for one moment minimized the generosity of the people of the United States, and its quite startling contrast with the record of this government. The generosity of the United States people as compared with Canada is thirty times greater per capita than has been the generosity of the Canadian people.

The government talk about the Colombo plan. We have heard a lot about what is being done under the Colombo plan, but what does it actually add up to? One cigarette per Canadian every third day is the extent of the sacrifice we are prepared to undergo to fulfil these noble aspirations; and I speak in all sincerity of what the Secretary of State for External Affairs has said. One cigarette per capita every third day is the measure of our generosity, and yet we are told that the living conditions of these people in Asia are intolerable. We are told that unless we do something they are going to become ripe for communism. And yet, that is the extent of the help we are giving today.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs has agreed in the past that one thing we could do would be to use to some extent the Colombo plan for feeding those who need food. I am not going to give the quotation which the minister gave in *Hansard* on October 22, 1951, but he agreed that the supplying of food to India would have the effect basically of strengthening the economy of that country. And these economic results accruing from the gifts of food are worth considering. Here I should like to quote two paragraphs from the report of the Colombo plan issued in New Delhi last October. On page 52, paragraph 12, we find the following:

Pakistan was faced with two serious problems during the period under review, the shortage of food and the balance of payments deficit. The first was averted by assistance from outside. But for this assistance the position would have been very difficult. The development program would have received a serious setback if it had been necessary for Pakistan to provide foreign exchange from its own resources to buy wheat from abroad.