

agree with is the government's refusal to separate what should be separated, thus making official development assistance dependent on commercial interests. This is no doubt why the government made no commitment either in its policy on the gradual elimination of tied aid, despite the recommendation of the joint foreign policy review committee. The same recommendation was made by the development assistance committee of the OECD.

The official development assistance budget is suffering in all this confusion. Too many Canadian businesses are currently benefiting from CIDA funds that should go instead to international development, because of the ambiguity surrounding this issue. The priorities of the aid program simply cannot be linked to the objectives of Canada's trade policy. It is vital that CIDA be protected from the influence of the various departments it regularly deals with, often to the detriment of the aid itself.

CIDA's mandate should also have been clarified in a constituent act. However, we understand from the government's recent statement on Canadian foreign policy that such an act is not one of its objectives.

Yet the special joint committee responsible for reviewing Canadian foreign policy recommended, in response to pressure by Bloc Quebecois members of the committee, that Parliament pass a bill establishing the fundamental principles of development aid. It also recommended in its majority report that such development aid provided by the government be subject to regular review by committees of the House and of the Senate.

The response of the Canadian government was that, while the intention was noble and justified, the government did not intend to pass such a bill on the grounds that it would not necessarily serve the goals of aid and would reduce program flexibility. In other words, the government was of the opinion that legislation on development aid would be too restrictive.

By clearly establishing the goals of development aid and the mandate of the agency responsible for carrying out international cooperation programs, the government would evidently be forced to follow strict rules of conduct. It would probably no longer be possible to promote international trade via development programs or, at least, this would be somewhat awkward for a government which prides itself on being in charge of one of the most generous countries in the world.

• (1550)

Small gestures most often reveal the underlying agenda of a government, and, in this regard, clause 7 is quite revealing. Although the ministers of this government make speeches about eliminating poverty and reducing the gap between rich and poor countries, when bills are tabled in the House of Commons, other considerations always take precedence over Canadian and Que-

becois values, even though the government claims it wants to promote them.

This comes as no surprise, considering that, in its February 1994 budget, the government cut the official development assistance budget, tightened unemployment insurance eligibility and forgot to address the inequities in the tax system that the official opposition had been pointing out for months.

It was with the same agenda that the government claimed to go ahead with social program reforms, while its real goal, which was finally announced by the Minister of Human Resources Development, was to cut the social program budget by \$15 billion over 5 years.

Therefore, the government's method is the same whether it is dealing with domestic or foreign policy: it says one thing, but does another. Thus the meaning of the slogan of the foreign affairs committee's former chairman is becoming clearer: foreign policy reflects domestic policy and domestic policy reflects foreign policy.

In conclusion, the Bloc Quebecois criticizes the government for not having clarified in this bill where it is going with its aid programs for the poorest countries of the planet. Instead, it satisfied itself with simply changing the name of the Department of Foreign Affairs. Instead of checking into a spa to rejuvenate and revitalize, it preferred to slap on more make-up. We can only wait for the next attempt.

[English]

**Mr. Bob Mills (Red Deer, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, it is with pleasure and some degree of surprise that I rise in the House today to debate Bill C-47, an act to amend the Department of External Affairs Act.

I would like to tell the House why I am surprised to be speaking today. It is because I was not told until 4 p.m. yesterday that the bill would be up for debate. The government did not bother to tell our House leader's office until 3.30 p.m.

Is it another example of how the government wants to act in matters such as this one? It possibly handles the country like this as well. Even more surprising, Bill C-47 was not an upcoming government bill on the House of Commons Order Paper for Monday.

Only yesterday the Parliamentary Secretary to the Government House Leader attempted to lecture my esteemed Reform colleague from Peace River and myself on a point of order about how hard the government was working to give us advanced warning of upcoming events.

If less than a day is what the government considers to be plentiful warning time, I suppose the member for Kingston and the Islands was right. However, with the bill going into third reading the government has no real reason to spring it on us.