

Food Aid

known to those people who elect us to this House of Commons. I think it would be fair to say that many people across this country have no comprehension of the hunger, starvation and depravity that exists throughout the world.

I was talking about self-interest earlier. Surely it is in the self-interest of Canada to have a stable world populated by stable people who have a decent chance of living and a decent amount of food to satisfy their hunger.

The opposite, of course, is equally true. If we have a globe populated by people who do not have the basic necessities of life—food, clothing and shelter—are they not ripe for revolution, and are they not ripe to be taken over by groups of people who may not have their interests at heart but may use them as ploys in international world politics? If we as Canadians look at the global situation, we must come to the conclusion that if at least we are not humanitarians we should look after our own self-interest. That self-interest is to assist by means of increasing the agricultural expectations of other countries; that is, to grow their own grain and raise their own food and, in the meantime, provide a bridge until they are self-sufficient. I refer to a bridge by way of CIDA through food plans.

I trust that Canada does have that role to play. If we have nothing else but self-interest at heart, we should think of the tremendous good will Canada as a nation is able to achieve as a bridging agent, without asking that we have any concessions in these countries. We do not want to station troops in these various countries. We have no self-interest as far as territorial ambition is concerned. We have a role to play as a neutral party interested in the development of these countries. I cannot give the exact quotation, but if we throw bread upon the water, I wonder what will come back. I wonder if in the self-interest of Canada we should perhaps look at this more seriously. We should sell this message across Canada so that public opinion, instead of being, "My God, what is the government doing again, giving grain to Bangladesh or somebody else?" will be: "Yes, it is in our self-interest", regardless whether we are humanitarians.

If we cannot sell this concept on a humanitarian basis, perhaps we should sell it on a self-interest basis. But we have to sell it because, as someone once said, it is about one minute to midnight and we do not have much time left. We do not have the luxury of debating whether this is a good or a bad program. That time has passed. The time for action is certainly here, and that is why I commend the hon. member for bringing this subject forward in the House.

Coming from British Columbia I know it is not an easy subject to broach. Unfortunately, a member of the media in Vancouver—and since I have freedom of speech in the House of Commons I will mention the name of Mr. Murphy of CJOR—has done everything in his power to hinder everything that has been done by CIDA. To go to Vancouver at this particular time and discuss CIDA is almost to have a lynch mob after you, because there are groups of people in Canada, such as CJOR's Mr. Ed Murphy, who have done everything possible to foment hatred—and I use the word "hatred" against Canadian aid programs, using the most least plausible

[Mr. Anderson.]

reason. If anything ever goes wrong, they tell you about that wrong in respect of these programs. Mr. Murphy has brought these wrongs to the attention of the people in that area.

That does not represent a balanced view because he is not giving the other side of the coin—the good these programs have done. All of us know it is difficult to operate these programs in areas where there is very little development. If things are going to go wrong, obviously they are going to go wrong in countries without transportation, where the communication is weak and where the infrastructure is not established. But that should not be a cause to decry these programs; rather it should be a plea to improve the situation in those countries, and it should be looked at in that context. We should not be emphasizing that something was late in being delivered and therefore something is wrong. If these countries had these systems in place I expect we would not be providing the aid to them in the first place.

I hope hon. members here will speak against the bigotry that does exist in certain parts of Canada. I suspect that only one argument is being heard. We are not hearing the good side of the story. It is important to the people of Canada that there be a balance and that the good side of these programs be brought out rather than negated. I suspect, as a result of what has happened in the west, there are many people who do not appreciate the efforts made by CIDA and other non-governmental organizations. In the west we are now referred to as the bleeding hearts. If that is the case, so be it. It is my hope that there are more people in this country who will listen to their consciences rather than to the bigots of this country who will tell you that every dollar we spend to assist developing countries is being wasted and, therefore, must be stopped.

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, even though this is a serious debate I hope I might be pardoned if I utter just a few words in a light vein. I should like to assure the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald) that I am not one of those who ever frequents a weight reducing clinic.

Seriously, I want to commend the hon. member for Egmont for introducing this motion this afternoon. I want also to congratulate him on the excellent statement he made in opening the debate. Bearing in mind the profession that the hon. member and I share in common, I think I might say that he could well have made that statement as a sermon from any pulpit in any church in this country. If he had done that it would be expected of him to attach a text to the sermon. The text is a very obvious one, the words of which come ringing to us from across many centuries:

—they shall beat their swords into plowshares,
and their spears into pruninghooks:
nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more.

As I say, the challenge of those words comes across the centuries, and I doubt if any generation was ever confronted with that challenge more seriously than we are today. It is in that sense that I offer my warm congratulations to the hon.