

*Commonwealth Caribbean*

Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), answering a question from one of my hon. friends, gave a run-down of his forthcoming trip to Jamaica where he would be meeting with several first ministers from around the world on the general subject of the north-south alignment. The hon. member for Burnaby-Seymour forgets that his own party has been a leader and, indeed, has supported the two reports of the subcommittee on international development to which my hon. friend from Hillsborough referred. The members of the Liberal party joined members from both sides in making unanimous the two reports which were prepared in 1976 and 1977 as a reflection of the concern of the many members in all parties with regard to the north-south problem.

Those reports from the subcommittee on international development were a reflection of the work which the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence is capable of doing were it given sufficient opportunity. These reports stand out as exceptions to the general lassitude which characterizes the work of the committees generally, and specifically of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence. If there is any improvement to be made in helping Canadians understand a wider sense of opportunity and obligation—the hon. member for Hillsborough pinpoints a specific area, the Caribbean—it is through the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence. I say to the House with great confidence it will not be long before events are set in motion whereby a sense of leadership will be given to the Canadian people to explain and support the measures which have been recommended by members of parliament from both sides who took part in those hearings.

I will just refer briefly to a couple of sections in that report from the subcommittee on international development. My hon. friend from Hillsborough, referring to the north-south problem in the Caribbean, has by implication talked about the debt problem of the developing countries today. The report which the subcommittee offered to the House and to the government started by quoting the Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, Mr. Ramphal, himself a distinguished son of the Caribbean. He said:

The inequities in the international system are of tremendous significance. They have given rise to essentially two worlds and the disparities between them are growing. One is the world of the rich, the other the world of the poor, united by its heritage of common suffering. A poverty curtain divides the world materially and philosophically. One world is literate, the other largely illiterate; one industrial and urban, the other predominantly agrarian and rural; one consumption oriented the other striving for survival—

The second report from the subcommittee had to do with intermediate funding. One of the recommendations, indeed, the principal finding and recommendation, reads as follows:

The flow of "aid", or real financial resources, to developing countries remains as important and urgent as ever and is still the most concrete yardstick of the commitment of wealthier countries to assist the developing world. It is important to stress the continuing role of aid since the debate on the "new international economic order" has often focused primarily on "non-aid" aspects of co-operation.

When the hon. member for Hillsborough comes into the House on a Friday afternoon and reminds us of our opportunities to fulfil the commitments our country has made over the

years, for his pains he gets a speech saying we have to improve the situation in domestic air fares and domestic student exchange rates. In other words, we have to make great improvements in the internal economy of our country before we address ourselves to the larger matters of the world. Mr. Speaker, every day of the week members of House are engaged in that very exercise of analysing and trying to improve domestic economy.

Is the hon. member trying to tell us that we cannot give any priority to the subjects my hon. friend mentioned? He forgets that a large percentage of the land of the world and 99.5 per cent of the people of the world are not in Canada. What shocks me is how little time is spent in the House of Commons devoted to occasions on which members can discuss more realistic policies of Canadian involvement in a changing world. If there is any characteristic which marks my hon. friend's motion this afternoon it is the characteristic of being sensible. It is eminently sensible.

I will read the operative section of the motion. He recommends "assistance towards meetings of political, business and educational leaders of the two regions with a view to stimulating a north-south exchange of goods, people, services and technology in a mutually advantageous way." He understands the reality of the human condition today that is threatened by this widening chasm between the 30 per cent of the world who live in the advantaged countries and the 70 per cent who live in the developing countries devoid of any means by which to make themselves more self-reliant. That is what the issue is today. Canada benefits from a more vigorous participation in improving north-south relations.

I shall certainly not be the one to talk out this motion. I want it to go to a committee. I want the subject matter to be communicated to the people of Canada and, indeed, to the government side here this afternoon, because it represents the voice of wisdom and outlines the practical steps to be taken in order to move the north-south debate ahead.

There was an implication in the Prime Minister's answer this afternoon in reply to a question, and I invite the hon. member to go back and look at *Hansard* for the Prime Minister said, and he was right, a log-jam had interrupted the north-south dialogue between the developed and the developing nations. Everybody who follows the international scene today is all too conscious of that log-jam.

Many things must be done of a sensible nature, as my hon. friend suggests, which can begin to move us forward in practical steps to close that gap in such a way that the people of the developed countries, as well as the developing countries, are the beneficiaries. I invite the hon. member to give that aspect some thought, even from the vantage point of beautiful British Columbia. British Columbia as well as Prince Edward Island will be among the chief beneficiaries of this move. You see, it is in the interests of both the rich and the poor to boost productivity all over the world.