

External Affairs

Mr. Green: The hon. member does not really believe that.

Mr. Argue: This headline seeker came out then and said, "I will give the house the government's disarmament policy". I think the disarmament policy enunciated by the Prime Minister should have been part of the statement of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, if not in his initial statement, certainly in his statement in closing the debate in this house.

Today we see that Canada is talking with two voices, the voice of the Secretary of State for External Affairs who says it is mere propaganda to announce the disarmament policy, and the Prime Minister who says "This is the policy".

What has happened, in my view, does not reduce the prestige of the minister of external affairs in this house in any way whatsoever. We know him too well to believe that it has resulted in that situation. But we are afraid that it may reduce his prestige in the councils of the world because of the fact that this action of the Prime Minister's does nothing to build respect for Canada's foreign policy. I submit that it lowers the prestige of parliament when hon. members on this side of the house put forward propositions, there is an exchange between hon. members of the opposition and the government and we are unable to get from the responsible minister the government's policy but have to wait till the Prime Minister, in a very dramatic and successful bid for the headlines, enunciates a so-called disarmament policy. I say so-called because I wondered how substantial it could be when announced in this ad hoc, off the cuff, publicity-seeking fashion. Perhaps the Prime Minister had an envelope in his pocket, pulled it out, jotted down a few headlines, dumped them into the debate, made the C.B.C. news, made every morning newspaper, shoved the Leader of the Opposition, the minister for external affairs and everybody else back to page 24, and said, "A very successful day for me in the House of Commons".

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Argue: If it had happened in the United Kingdom, then I think it would have resulted in the minister for external affairs turning in his resignation. I am not suggesting that should be done. I would regret it if that course were taken, but I think the Prime Minister of this country should realize that the prestige of Canada's foreign policy, the prestige of parliament—yes, and if it does come from me, the prestige of this government—depends to a substantial extent on the Prime Minister showing confidence

in the gentlemen who occupy the treasury benches and sit with him in cabinet meetings. I suggest that he has not acted toward his good friend in a forthright or democratic fashion.

I began by saying that in the minister's speech and in the contribution of the Prime Minister there seemed little recognition of the economic challenge facing the western world. Some of this challenge, some of this competition, I suggest, must be met by a much larger role to be played by Canada in the field of economic assistance and the development of peoples in underprivileged countries. In recent days we have seen announcements that the Soviet union has made loans of \$350 million to India at two and a half per cent, according to the news reports, and a long term loan to Cuba of \$100 million at two and a half per cent. If we wish, we can say for our own satisfaction that there are strings attached; it is a pig in a poke.

Mr. Bigg: Slave money.

Mr. Argue: Slave money? I do not think the people of India are slaves in accepting that money. But I do say that Canada should be doing much more than making a contribution of \$50 million or \$60 million in the field of economic assistance. We should devote more than half a million dollars to helping to feed the refugees. We have said at the C.C.F. party convention that it would not be asking the Canadian people more than they would be willing to pay if we suggested that 1 per cent of Canada's gross national product was not too large a proportion of our resources to place in this field of economic assistance. The Canadian people would be prepared to pay one penny out of every dollar of our production in order to help the underprivileged nations of the commonwealth, and of other parts of Asia, South Africa and South America.

I had intended to say something on the question of our defence policy and the waste, as I see it, within our defence establishment. The hon. member for Marquette (Mr. Mandziuk) said Canada must remain strong. I agree. But I think our national defence program, based on obsolete weapons, means that Canada today is weak in defence, and I suggest that some of the money now being spent on obsolete weapons and on the production of weapons which may soon be cancelled might well be used, under real leadership, by the democratic nations to help underdeveloped countries find a higher standard of living, to remove hunger and misery and to assist them on the road to democratic development. I suggest this would be a course