

teenth century, and so on. In another area of activity, there is a certain exchange of ideas which one finds in the United Nations, as is normal in international affairs. One country will support you in your initiative and you will support that country in its initiative. If you see a country voting in a way that seems strange in terms of its national interest, very often the explanation simply lies in the fact that a vote in support of some interest was traded for a vote in another area.

But an important third element in explaining the way in which the automatic majority in the United Nations works is simply corruption, and that is a fact on which more and more attention, I believe, should be focused. There are more than a few countries represented at the UN whose votes are simply up for grabs. Sometimes it is a matter of making a bank deposit in the bank account of a head of state. When a delegate is sent at large with no instructions from his country, it is simply a matter, for a state which wishes to do so, of finding that man, discovering his price, and buying his country's vote. To a deplorable extent this is happening more and more at the UN, and Canada, which, as I said, looked first to the United Nations with hopefulness, must be discouraged by these developments at the United Nations.

I want to ask the minister whether he is discouraged by it, if he accepts my reading of it and, in that perspective, how does he think Canada should be behaving at present at the United Nations? It is easy to say that we go to the UN to try to make a contribution to world peace, to try to work out solutions that will lead to international stability, to contribute to economic development, to the emergence of countries from colonialism to independence and to fight racial discrimination. But what is happening at the UN now in the General Assembly is that it is a less and less balanced forum. We find it difficult to speak for the things the Canadian people want us to speak. We find it hard to stand for principles at the United Nations.

Some countries are very cynical about their position in the world. France is said to brag that it has no friends, it just has interests. That may well be true for France but it is certainly not the kind of foreign policy the Canadian people want. If you have listened to the debate in the House today, Mr. Chairman, what will strike you most of all is the altruism—in some cases quite wrong-headed, I would say—that motivates those who represent Canadians as we think about foreign policy. As I listened to my friends across the floor I was struck that the last thing they think about are Canada's national interests.

I hope the minister will take up the nuclear issue, I do not want to take my time to do it. The issue as the opposition members raised it is not a valid one. The posture of the opposition reflected the way in which the majority of Canadians think on foreign policy in general. I think Canadians want their foreign policy to put self-interest behind a national sense of purpose. They want us to express the way Canadians feel about international affairs, not only narrow economic interests or narrow interests of one kind or another. I suggest that when we go to the UN, we should not abstain on issues on which there is a tremendous amount of feeling on the part of the Canadian people.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Business of Supply

Mr. Kaplan: Canada's foreign policy has a lot of bipartisan support. For example, Canadians are against torture. When you say that in Canada, you sound as if you were referring to the nineteenth century, but torture is very real now in this world. At the United Nations we should not abstain on a lot of the resolutions dealing with torture as we do. We should condemn torture, whether it is practised in Brazil, Uganda or France. That is the way Canadians feel about these things. We are against terrorism, whether it is done by self-styled movements of national liberation or by fringe pirates who are exploiting international situations. We should speak out against it; we should vote against it.

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We are against racial discrimination on a totally bipartisan basis, and we are not just against it on paper. We are one of the countries against it in practice, and we should say so at the United Nations. We should condemn not only racial prejudice against blacks, but we should also condemn racial prejudice against whites in countries where that takes place, and there are a number. We should condemn it against all races.

What are we for? I am not going to give a long list, but we are in favour of advancing the rights of women, free speech within countries and free expression of minorities. When we go to the United Nations, we ought to let the world know that, not only in what we say, but in the way we vote.

I want to make two observations about what I would call the bipartisan principles of the Canadian attitude to international affairs. The first is that if we followed the policy of talking the way Canadians want us to, and voting the way Canadians want us to, we would be following a policy which is quite different from the policy we are following today.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Kaplan: Regrettably at the UN, ours is a policy of concern for our credibility, of wanting to keep our powder dry for the eventual day two or three years from now when the crunch may come and we can then call upon the support which we will have earned by current compromise.

I want to ask the minister whether he feels that we gain credibility or lose credibility by standing for something in the world. I hope he takes the position that we gain credibility. With our policy outside the United Nations I am rather content. I think that all the points we have made on a bilateral basis and in multilateral forums show that we do stand for principle. We have a policy of which Canadians can be proud, but in the UN General Assembly, where the air is polluted and where unbalanced resolutions are brought forward in the hope of catching countries off guard and in the hope of forcing them to abstain, I would say we should stop being conned. We ought to look UN issues in the face. We ought to analyze their thrust and we ought to take positions which express the way Canadians feel about these things.

I know that a great many issues have been raised in this debate, and I will not be disappointed if the minister, in the brief time he will have, will be unable to reply to the