

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved,

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—CHARGE BY UNITED NATIONS
SECRETARY GENERAL THAT CANADA ENGAGED IN BRAIN
DRAIN OF DEVELOPING COUNTRIES—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, on March 19 I asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) to comment on the report of U.N. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim to the U.N. Committee on science and technology a report entitled "Outflow of Trained Personnel from Developing to Developed Countries". This report names Canada as one of the advanced nations benefitting from the migration of highly trained persons from the developing nations.

This problem, known as the brain drain, is of great concern to the United Nations, for the very persons best equipped to build up the poor countries of the world are often the ones who migrate. For example, in the five year period from 1968-1972, 2,178 Filipino nurses came to Canada, 450 doctors from India, 606 teachers from China, Hong Kong, and 1,601 teachers from the West Indies.

It is essential to take a responsible, global view of this problem. I welcome all immigrants to Canada, and I would not in the least interfere with the human right of anyone to migrate. But there are very large implications to this problem. As the Secretary General's report makes clear:

● (2200)

The United States, the United Kingdom and Canada are receiving as a gift from developing nations a large cadre of trained persons whose education was expensive to the developing countries, and who contribute critically important medical services to the populations of the developed countries. It is not possible to arrive at any single figure representing the monetary gain to receiving countries. However, it is clear that the total gain for major receiving countries should be considered as being in the hundreds of millions of dollars per year.

Consider migrating physicians for a moment. Physicians can secure a higher income by migrating, even though they are on the average at the lower end of the income scale for physicians in the developed countries. The glaring paradox is that they move from countries where the need for their service is acute to countries much better supplied with medical personnel. Stated another way, a few relatively poor developing countries are devoting scarce resources to the costly education of a critically important professional group, many of whom migrate permanently to a few developed countries.

Migration of highly skilled persons is thus correctly perceived by some countries as a serious threat to successful development efforts. In short, many developing nations see large numbers of their trained persons contribute to the steadily growing output of the developed countries at a time when they are desperately needed at home.

All of this, says Dr. Waldheim, raises questions of the "equity... and adequacy of the developmental assistance programs of the richer nations." For the brain drain prob-

Adjournment Debate

lem is but a symptom of the much larger problem of development of the developing countries. The vast numbers of talented people in all countries must be encouraged and helped to accept the challenges within their own countries. Solutions to the brain drain problem must be integrated in a renewed perception of international social justice. This integrated approach is essential to the attainment of peace, freedom and justice in the world.

We must ask ourselves if it is socially just for Canada to impose such restrictive immigration regulations as was done last February 21. Under these rules, non-sponsored immigrants to Canada will have to prove their talents are needed before being allowed in the country. By so closely tying immigration to manpower needs, does not the Canadian policy work against the interests of the developing countries in precisely the way Dr. Waldheim protested? Our policy inevitably discriminates against the non-white, non-industrialized, non-rich parts of the world, because the general population of these areas is excluded from Canada while the most highly educated are welcome. Thus Canada, like other western, rich countries, skims off those persons most essential to the modernization of their countries. This is what follows from having economic indicators dominate immigration policy.

In the immigration review now under way, Canadians are being asked the key question: "What are our international responsibilities?" Mr. Speaker, I urge the government and indeed all thoughtful Canadians to consider immigration and population policies in the framework of this larger question. The world is changing more rapidly than we can perceive and piecemeal answers are inadequate.

Affluent man has created more wealth than Croesus ever dreamed of, but at the expense of more misery than the world can bear. Hundreds of millions of people living in the developing countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America are caught up in conditions of deprivation that no set of statistics can begin to describe. The rich squabble over butter; the poor cannot even afford fertilizer. It is a scandal beyond belief.

The Secretary of State for External Affairs made an excellent speech before the special session of the United Nations General Assembly on April 11, in which he pledged increased Canadian aid in the areas of the developing world most in need. I congratulate him on that speech and I urge the government to contribute to the forthcoming World Congress on Population with this same large viewpoint. Not population problems alone, not immigration policies alone, not foreign aid and trade policies alone, will help the two billion people in 100 underdeveloped countries of the world, only an integrated policy of world development will meet this massive challenge. We must accept this challenge, and all of us in parliament should help Canada take a role of international leadership in removing the inhuman inequalities which exist today.

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should like to congratulate the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona (Mr. Roche) for having raised this issue and for the excellent statement that he has made in support of the question that he asked the other day about the report of the Secretary General.