

International Economic Conference

I believe I should mention again that the negotiations in the three day ministerial conference or, as it turned out, in a four day plus ministerial conference, were conducted at the ministerial level. For example, the negotiations on the energy side on the part of the G8 were led by Mr. Vance. The negotiations on the integrated program were led, on the G8 side, by the British foreign secretary, Mr. Owen, and the Australian foreign secretary, Mr. Peacock, and on the other questions of debt and official development assistance, Mr. Roy Jenkins, the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Gillespie), and the Swedish foreign secretary, Madame Soder, were the leaders on our side.

● (1510)

The conference represented direct interaction between leading ministers on both sides, and I believe that a much deeper understanding has been achieved as a result of this particular ministerial negotiation. It achieved important advances in the positions of the industrialized countries in areas such as official development assistance, special action, a common fund, and mutual recognition of common problems in the energy sector. The dialogue will now be pursued in other international bodies because, as hon. members realize, the Conference on International Economic Co-operation terminated in Paris. It was intended to be a conference of one year's duration. It lasted for a year and a half, mainly because of the change of administration in the United States, but now it has terminated. I believe it provided a sound basis for work in other international bodies.

The complete results of the conference and its detailed agreements will receive careful study and will prompt follow up action in many areas, and later when the detailed agreements have been brought together, I hope to have them tabled in the House of Commons so that hon. members will have an opportunity to examine the range of issues which were discussed and the number of substantial agreements and disagreements which were registered in the course of the conference.

I believe that despite disagreements and despite failure to reach agreement on all fronts, the progress registered at CIEC justifies the continuing efforts of developed and developing countries to work out their problems in a spirit of co-operation and non-confrontation. I believe that the over-all result justifies the very considerable Canadian effort which was expended at this conference, an effort which I believe has reflected very favourably on Canada internationally.

I would like particularly to pay tribute to the Canadian delegation at the Conference on International Economic Co-operation. Throughout the conference, and especially during periods of enormous pressure and impending crisis, the Canadian team of officials performed superbly in managing the conference and Canada's relationships with its participants with great skill and dedication. In conclusion—and I hope this is listened to by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson)—I believe it is important that Canada contin-

[Mr. MacEachen.]

ue to play a leading role in the area of north-south relations in the post-CIEC period.

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I want to begin by thanking the minister for the arduous personal efforts he made in his role as chairman for the developed countries at the North-South Conference.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Roche: Even from a distance I could appreciate the intensity of the midnight consultations. I hope the minister will not accept my criticism of the results of the conference as any diminution of his evident dedication to closing the rich-poor gap in the world.

What counts, however, is results, and the results of the North-South Conference are dismal. I suppose the minister feels he has to put the best face on things, but the disappointing communique issued at the end of CIEC tells me that it is time to stop this charade of applying cosmetics to the relations between the developed and the developing nations, for more and more people on both sides of the development gap are cynical about elaborate postponements, glamorous diversions, and grandiose schemes.

The minister hesitates to characterize CIEC as either a success or a failure. One has the feeling that he defines success as the absence of total breakdown. While the plain word "failure" may be too jarring for the minister to bear, let us at least agree that the North-South Conference was an un-success.

The developing countries—whose interests, after all, were the focus of the conference—put it plainly in the communique as follows:

... Most of the proposals for structural changes in the international economic system and certain of the proposals for urgent actions on pressing problems have not been agreed upon. Therefore, the Group of 19 feels that the conclusions of CIEC fall short of the objectives envisaged for a comprehensive and equitable program of action designed to establish the New International Economic Order.

There is no getting around the fact that the final communique listed 21 points of disagreement, including a failure to solve the debt burden and purchasing power problems of the developing countries, which were two issues which lay at the heart of CIEC. The communique listed 20 points of agreement, including the \$1 billion special action program and support for the common fund for commodities, but even here the nature of the common fund was thrown back to UNCTAD.

In his statement today the minister indicated that a clearer understanding of the issues was a major gain, but CIEC was designed for action, on the ground that the multiple conferences of the 1970's have provided the education base. The minister himself acknowledged this when he told the sub-committee on international development last March 30 that a failure at CIEC, or even an apparent failure, would be a serious set-back in the process of international co-operation.

No international group has provided a more balanced analysis and program than the Commonwealth Experts, who have