

Oral Questions

Mr. Trudeau: That is all I pointed out. I remind the hon. lady that the fisheries treaty was negotiated under our government essentially by the minister of fisheries, the then secretary of state for external affairs, Mr. Jamieson, and with considerable help from the present Minister of Finance. It was something which was put together by our government and the administration of President Carter. Indeed the House supported it, and we are grateful for the support we have had from the opposition in this matter.

Miss MacDonald: Stick with it.

Mr. Trudeau: The hon. lady urges me to "stick with it". I will bring the message and report it to President-elect Reagan the moment I see him.

Miss MacDonald: It may be six months away.

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● (1425)

NORTH-SOUTH RELATIONS

COMMITMENTS TO THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Madam Speaker, my question refers to the Prime Minister's recent trip and his recently expressed concern about the problems of the Third World. Would he explain briefly to the House why the Government of Canada has during the past decade failed almost completely to live up to its own commitment to the Third World and, given that failure, why does the Prime Minister expect the position of the Government of Canada now on the Third World to be at all taken seriously?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): Madam Speaker, I do not think much that the government has done is taken seriously by the hon. gentleman's party, but I can assure him that the leaders of government and of state I have met on this recent trip do take the Government of Canada seriously. They do realize that we have not in the north—and Canada is one of the northern countries—progressed as much as they would like, but they recognize Canada's sincerity and our efforts in bringing the world closer to these solutions.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister knows full well that we are well behind virtually every Scandinavian country in this regard; we are behind The Netherlands and we are behind many, many other industrialized countries. Specifically, since it was his government which promised in 1975 the target of assistance to the Third World would be some .7 per cent of our GNP and that in each year since our contribution has fallen away from that target instead of toward it, to the extent that last year we gave about half what the government committed to give in the way of assistance to the Third World, will he tell the House whether the Government of Canada still stands by its commitment and, if so, when does it plan to live up to it?

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, the answer was given by the Secretary of State for External Affairs in a commitment he made publicly, I believe it was last month, that we would reach the figure of .5 per cent in 1985 and we planned to reach the .7 per cent figure by 1990. The hon. gentleman says that from 1975 on we have not progressed in proportional terms toward the goal I had set, and he is right. But he will recognize that from 1968 until, I believe, 1975 there was a considerable increase in absolute dollar terms and, of course, in proportion by the Canadian government and the Canadian people in contributing to the solution of the North-South dialogue through its CIDA program and others. So there has been progress.

I must remind the hon. member that around 1975 there was a particular series of economic difficulties which beset Canada and other of the developed countries and we fell victim to those. I can only express regret that we did not find more room in the budget to continue supporting the thrust of external aid in those years, but I would hope that, with the hon. gentleman's support, we will be able to do better in the future.

Mr. Broadbent: Madam Speaker, the Prime Minister knows that in spite of the international financial difficulties to which he referred, since 1975 a number of other countries not only measured up to but in some cases exceeded their commitments. The Prime Minister has just said it is going to take until 1990, some 15 years, for the government to live up to its commitment made in 1975 to reach .7 per cent of GNP. That is almost as long as it is going to take the Government of Canada, if the Prime Minister's party remains in power, to get control of our own energy sector.

Since in the present year it is estimated some 450 million people throughout the world have a totally inadequate diet in terms of food, and since one of the things this country does very well is produce food, will the Prime Minister increase this year's budget for the world food program beyond what it now is and which in real dollars for 1981 is less than it was for last year? In other words, will the Government of Canada put up now and live up to some of its promises to the people throughout the world who badly need assistance?

● (1430)

Mr. Trudeau: Madam Speaker, in the direction suggested by the hon. member I point out to him that just a few days ago in Senegal this government committed itself to an increase in its aid merely in the area of food to that country of some \$5 million just to help them meet the present emergency. I of course agree that much more should be done in the field of agricultural aid. I discussed this problem, notably in Senegal and in Brazil. I must remind the hon. gentleman that food aid in this sense can be counterproductive, and this was well recognized in the report to which members of the hon. member's party subscribed, the recent report of the parliamentary committee on North-South relations. It was recognized that one must also assist agriculture in those countries and not just give food because that would tend to prevent them from solving their problem in the long run. The government is trying