

together, have been prepared to make it a common cause to work together to respond to this crisis.

Mr. Speaker: Let me be clear. I see two more Members rising to ask questions, I presume of the Minister. I will accept those two questions and then I will end this discussion.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, could the Minister inform the House of the outcome of his discussions with the former Minister of Agriculture, who apparently had substantial plans in mind to deal with this situation but which apparently did not meet with the favour of his colleagues in the last administration?

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I had an opportunity to meet for an hour last week with the Hon. Mr. Whelan. I thought it not proper to go back into matters that were the business of the previous government and so spoke with him about his responsibilities as President of the World Food Council and any recommendations that he might make. He had some useful specific suggestions that we are following up, and it is Mr. MacDonald's hope and my own that we will be able to take advantage of the very real experience of Mr. Whelan in continuing an effective Canadian response to the crisis in Ethiopia.

● (1230)

Mr. de Corneille: Mr. Speaker, first I want to add my congratulations to those of others to the right hon. gentleman in terms of the trip he has made and his efforts on behalf of those who are suffering. Also I was happy to hear his comments in relation to the Hon. Eugene Whelan. Unfortunately he is unable to fulfil the kind of mandate he could have been doing so well at the present time.

My question is about this "now you see it now you don't", this \$27 million. Is this the \$27 million which he has "found" the \$27 million that was presumably cancelled by the last government? Was that before the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) made his announcement or made his cancellation, or did he find the \$27 million after the Minister's speech? Where did this \$27 million come from? Was it from the present budget since the Minister of Finance made his announcement, or did it come before the Minister's announcement?

This juggling of figures is confusing not only to me but to a number of Canadians. On the one hand they are cutting money for foreign aid in the statement of the Minister of Finance, and on the other they are finding money which was cut out by the last Minister, and now adding on a number of new items. It is a sort of shell game. Would the Right Hon. Minister explain to Canadians just what is happening? He said that it is clear. I do not find it clear.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, I will explain it for a third time. First, let me say that it was the decision of the Government, after we had decided not to go ahead with the establishment of an ambassador to the Food and Agriculture Organization, to invite the Hon. Eugene Whelan to remain in the chair of the World Food Council. I am pleased, as I trust

Statements by Ministers

are other Members on all sides of the House, that he accepted that invitation which allows him to play, not only with his interest but with some authority, a role in this and other questions of concern to Canadians and to the world.

With regard to the money involved here, the former Liberal government cut foreign aid in the summer. When the Minister of Finance made his economic statement, he indicated in those figures that much of the money which had been cut by the Liberal government in the summer was being returned by the Progressive Conservative Government to the purposes of overseas development and foreign aid. By a decision of the Government, \$28 million of that sum has been directed toward the fund for Africa.

In addition, we have secured in the neighbourhood of \$20 million which would not otherwise have been available to me as the Minister responsible for the Canadian International Development Association and for external affairs. That money is now available for the special African fund. I trust that my third explanation is clear to the House.

Mr. Thacker: Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark). A number of my constituents have asked for assurance that our food and other aid will be spread equally in Ethiopia. Could the Minister give us that assurance? They do not believe that someone should starve because he or she has a different political ideology than the government of the day.

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): Mr. Speaker, it was precisely to seek an answer to that question that I went to Ethiopia along with other Members of the House who were part of the delegation. I cannot give an absolute guarantee. There is no doubt that there will be some slippage in the delivery system. However, I can tell the House, the Hon. Member and the people of Canada that it is my view—and I think that is the view shared by all other Canadians who were there—that the Government of Ethiopia is giving it the highest possible priority and has developed what non-governmental organizations working in Ethiopia believe to be a very effective system to ensure that aid is being delivered to the starving.

There is a civil war in progress. Part of the reason for adopting the formula we have today is that many non-governmental organizations that are being helped by the fund announced by the Government of Canada, rather than working through the Government of Ethiopia, are working by coming in through the Sudan to ensure that aid is available to the starving who are on the other side of the government in that civil war. I cannot guarantee that there will be no people who are put aside because of the civil war, but I think the actions taken by the Government of Ethiopia and the care we have taken in the design of the fund go as far as humanly possible toward ensuring that Canadian aid gets to Ethiopians who are starving.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!