

The Address—Ms. Hunter

environment, policy on South Africa, Central America, or a variety of other issues, the Government has provided little in the way of leadership.

The Throne Speech talks about a strong stand in defence of human rights. Again, the Government's record fails to support the rhetoric. I have a great deal of difficulty with the Government's notion that Canada must continue to lend comfort and money to repressive regimes if we are to have any hope of influencing their policies. There are many ways of influencing policies; giving them money is not one of them.

I now move on to overseas development assistance. This is an important aspect of Canada's international reputation, which I hope the Government will deem pertinent enough to support. The Government has given lip service in support of the Brundtland report which recognizes the responsibility of "have" nations to assist in the alleviation of poverty. I think it should be made clear that this should not be done out of a sense of charity. It should be done out of a sense of partnership with those countries. Canada was built in many ways by exploiting the resources not only of our own land but the resources of the Third World. I am not only talking about forestry resources or fishing resources; I am talking about people resources. We have benefited from the cheap labour of those countries.

In 1984 this Government backed away from the international commitment that ODA would reach .7 per cent of GNP by 1990 and instead set the date at 1995. In 1986 the Conservatives fudged again and rolled back the date to the year 2000. The Government should accelerate its plan for ODA and reach the .7 per cent level well before the year 2000.

The Government claims to be a world leader in international development, but ODA as a percentage of GNP has declined since 1984. We are behind Finland. Indeed in 1987 Canada was outpaced by all the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands and others.

We have a good reputation in the field of development, but it is folly to think we have done our bit. As long as there is hunger and poverty in the world, I am confident Canadians will support more emphasis on improving our international development assistance programs.

I caution the Government, before it drops the axe on international development programs, it would be well advised to examine polling data produced by the North-South Institute. Its polling indicates that 72 per cent of Canadians feel government aid spending was about right or too low. The same poll discovered that 93 per cent of Canadians rank poverty, hunger and disease as the most important international problems. Interestingly, Soviet aggression ranked last on the list. Perhaps the submarine salesmen should take a look at what they can contribute to deficit reduction.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Hunter: I now move on to one hopeful point in the Speech from the Throne, that is the one regarding reproductive technologies and a royal commission on them. I applaud the Government on this initiative, an initiative called for by the New Democrats. We await the terms of reference to govern this commission, but I hope, as the Hon. Member for New Westminster—Burnaby (Ms. Black) called for on Monday, that 50 per cent of the members of that commission should be women. I think that all Members of the House should look into this whole aspect.

I had the opportunity of hearing from one of my constituents who had attended an international conference on this matter. She said that women who have the tragedy of infertility are willing to pay for medical care where, if we submit animals to it, the SPCA would object. It is a tragedy which I hope the reproductive technologies commission will look into.

Finally I want to talk about a subject which I feel is very important, that is, the Speech from the Throne and the environment. Once again, rhetoric and action do not converge. This is an area where we must be careful about the rhetoric being captured by the business community. Sustainable development is becoming almost a dirty word because of who is saying it. I caution people that when they hear those terms they must look behind the language and see the action. There must be an environmental bill of rights to assure Canadians that the Government is sincere in protecting their environment.

In closing, I wish to thank the people of Saanich—Gulf Islands, a politically diverse group that have never before elected a New Democrat. I pledge to work hard on their behalf on issues of national, local and international interest.