

External Aid

developing countries when illiteracy rates are so high. They say that for these reasons any population control program would meet with little response.

I maintain that these views are precise but very debatable. To begin with, historical experience is hardly an adequate guide in a field where governmental action has been notoriously absent or undertakings have been negligible and disorganized. The chances of a population policy succeeding cannot therefore be discounted or ruled out. It remains sensible to propose such a policy as an alternative way of using resources to aid the advancement of underdeveloped countries. If economic growth is to be achieved then huge amounts of capital are required, and if this capital is to be created within an underdeveloped country by the country's own efforts it is necessary to direct resources from the production of goods for current consumption to the production of capital goods. This requires a cut in present personal living standards. If living standards are already virtually at the subsistence or poverty level, then such diversion is impossible.

• (6:10 p.m.)

This situation is often described as the vicious circle of poverty. It is described as such because when a country has limited resources per head it is poor, and because it is poor it can devote only few resources to creating new capital rather than producing goods for immediate consumption. Because little new capital can be produced, capital per head remains low. Because capital per head remains low the country remains poor. It seems to me this is tragic testimony that the natural methods of population check are still in evidence in our world today. These are pestilence, war and mass starvation. We could give many examples of these and Biafra is only one. People are starving all over the world and it is time that we as members of the human race opened up our eyes and started to do some planning. Canada as one of the more affluent nations has to take the lead in this activity.

The resolution now before the house is not compulsory nor does it infringe upon individual or the rights of countries. It only offers assistance in family planning and points out that many countries need this kind of assistance. Canada should take a more active role in international organizations and in trying to solve the world population explosion problem.

[Mr. Nystrom.]

I do not wish to say much more about this subject and I should like to hear the opinions of other hon. members. I hope this resolution will be allowed to pass for the consideration of the government of Canada because this is only one of a number of things we must do if we are going to create a viable world and a viable future for all members of the human race regardless of ethnic background, race, creed or colour of skin. This is something we can offer to do and I should like to see Canada as one of the better off countries in the world take this issue in stride.

[Translation]

Mr. Gaston Isabelle (Hull): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to take part in the debate on the motion of my colleague concerning family planning.

Naturally, I am in favour of family planning in Canada, as I am for it throughout the world. But, I do not really agree with the motion, although the philosophy on which it is based has merit. I feel that were it to be adopted things might become a bit tricky, as it would conflict with section 150 of the Criminal Code which forbids publicity on, and I quote:

—any means...intended or represented as a method of preventing conception or causing abortion or miscarriage—

Now, as we are now dealing with contraception, it seems to me Canada would be ill-advised to give its support, through an agency, to fostering what is forbidden at home by the Criminal Code.

The philosophy on which my colleague bases himself has great merit, as I have already said. Three or four days ago, the president of India, Doctor Hussein, said that if the family planning program did not prove effective in India, its population of 500 million today would within the next 30 years grow to a billion people.

It is said that in India family planning is not readily accepted. I wonder what tomorrow holds if that program does not become a fact. I do feel that it does not fall to Canada to interfere in the affairs of other countries, in any way whatsoever, and particularly in India where tradition is a way of life. From time immemorial, the Hindus have lived on a mystic plane. Cows roam the streets and it seems that a law cannot be passed to solve that problem. Now, if a country cannot even accept a law to protect the health of its population, one can imagine what troubles the government of India will have on its hands if it dares interfere with the women.