

Supply—External Affairs

approximately 1 per cent of the combined national incomes of the economically advanced countries.

I am aware, as of course are all hon. members, that on November 14 the Secretary of State for External Affairs announced an increase in the Canadian contributions to economic aid. This proposed increase, which is to come into effect in 1964-65, brings the Canadian contribution to \$190 million a year, a good deal of it in the form of loans; but I would point out to the committee this will be less than half of the 1 per cent which the United Nations has suggested as a reasonable standard. We believe that even with this announced increase there remains a gross imbalance between Canada's contribution to economic aid and the sum of roughly \$1.5 billion which Canada is spending annually on defence.

Our party, the New Democratic party, has been quite specific on this matter. We have committed ourselves to increasing economic aid to 2 per cent of the gross national income, roughly \$800 million a year, more than four times the figure proposed by this government, and yet I point out less than half the amount we are currently spending, and have been for many years, on more traditional forms of defence.

I would like to point out to the committee that a halfhearted attempt to solve this problem of world poverty and to meet the urgent physical needs of the vast majority of the human race, is just not good enough. If we are to preserve freedom we must recapture the spirit of purpose and compassion. There is no doubt that we have the physical resources, but what we lack is the vision and the will to use them. I, and this party for which I am speaking, would like to see Canada lead and not lag in this field.

While I am speaking on the United Nations and the economic welfare of the world, I want to refer to a subject which sometimes people think it is tactless or wrong to mention. I would like to ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs to tell us some time what stand Canada is taking in the United Nations, or anywhere else, to assist underdeveloped countries in the problem of population control. It is high time we stopped being mealy-mouthed about this issue and recognized that unrestricted population growth means that every effort to increase the standards of human living throughout the world and to abolish poverty will be frustrated. I think there is an international obligation on well developed countries to help other countries faced with this problem to do something about it.

[Mr. Brewin.]

I now want to turn to another problem. I believe it is absolutely essential that our defence policy be brought into harmony with our international policy. I know this is not a debate on defence policy, but the two are intimately linked. Our role in the world, which we express through our Department of External Affairs, must be supported by a posture of defence undertaken through the department of defence. Mr. Chairman, I might tell hon. members that the words "posture of defence" are something I picked up in my experience in the committee on defence.

We in this party believe, as I think most hon. members do, that our own security lies in the closest co-operation with those to whom we are linked by geography and history. In other words, we believe in the unity and the strength of the western alliance, but within this alliance Canada can play a more constructive and independent role. She can equip herself to carry out tasks that larger nations cannot do. Canada can seek a role which does not merely supplement what our allies can do well enough without us. There is no need for us to add to the forces of the type of which we already have a superfluity. We can undertake a role within the alliance, what has been expressed as the role of fire extinguisher or peacekeeper, which others in the alliance cannot do, or for a variety of reasons cannot do well.

I propose to conclude my remarks by making a serious complaint; nevertheless I hope it will be a constructive one. To me it is absolutely scandalous that neither in the last parliament nor in this session of this parliament has the committee on external affairs met, or been called to meet. I find this extremely strange under the present regime, because the Prime Minister, when he was secretary of state for external affairs and also when he was under secretary of state for external affairs, played a considerable part in seeking to enlarge the scope and the vitality of the parliamentary committee on external affairs. I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs, is it now the view of the government that interest in international affairs should be confined to a few departmental experts, or do they believe that the Canadian parliament should be concerned with these matters?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Chairman, in answer to the hon. gentleman, I hope we can set up the external affairs committee tomorrow morning, and sit next week. I share my hon. friend's desire to have this done.

Mr. Brewin: I hope the future actions of the minister and his government will not belie his words as much as his past actions have in