

S.O. 29

Having seen sanctions applied in a multitude of cases, against Italy when it invaded Ethiopia, and so on, they did not have the impact intended. If we obtained complete sanctions against South Africa by all the nations of the world, including Russia, there would be nothing but a poverty-stricken mess left. The basis for reconstruction would have been demolished. I plead with this House, with the world, to find common ground on which we can create the evolutionary process through which every democracy in the world today was created.

No country is more steeped in the basic desire for democracy than Canada. It was from undemocratic lands that our ancestors came to this country looking for freedom of opportunity, freedom of speech, and the freedom to vote. Let us then do what we can to guide the evolution and prevent the blood-bath of revolution. That I think is our role. We will have differences of opinion in Canada, in the Commonwealth, around the world.

I am not speaking out of a sense of greed for the economic benefits to Canada from its economic participation in South Africa. I am sincerely speaking in the long-term best interests of a country we would like to help and to whose internal disputes we would like to find a solution. No one in this House is more determined that that should be done than I. Therefore, we should not be involved in a political hassle over this. We should not be throwing brickbats at one another. We should not be divided among ourselves. That division was illustrated today. There seems to be no compromise on the position the Government should take. We should move step by step.

I am not supporting or opposing what the Conservative Party has done. I am speaking in what I believe to be a manner which relates to the evolutionary process of democratic government. Let us try to seek that evolution, because revolution leading to democratic government has failed in Angola, the Congo, Nigeria, or any other country I could name. A blood-bath took place behind a security curtain which we could not penetrate. We did not see the battlefields and the thousands that were slaughtered as one tribe fought another over control. It could be that we find ourselves in the position down the road, not too far, of having generated the same situation, given the disagreements among the various peoples who make up the African population.

Let us try persuasion, not sanctions. Let us not imply that we can exert force. If we sent the Canadian Army to the last man to that continent they would probably be gobbled up. We are helpless when it comes to exerting any effort by force.

This has been a good debate and I compliment those who participated. I wish we could get rid of the partisan aspects of this debate because our goals are the same. We should not be throwing brickbats at one another or the Commonwealth. We will find disagreement among leaders in the Commonwealth just as you find it among leaders here. That does not mean we should destroy Canada. Dissension and disagreement will always be with us because of differences of opinion. I particularly deplore the remark about the incompetence of the

Commonwealth and the slurs concerning different leaders of the Commonwealth. That does not contribute to the betterment of South Africa, the Commonwealth, or democracy.

Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor): Mr. Speaker, it is a privilege to be able to take part in a debate such as this in our elected Parliament, something which is not possible for many people in many countries of the world, not just South Africa. I want to start out with some memories, if you like, of Africa itself, to try to convey to the House why this particular cancer on the continent of Africa deserves so much attention from the rest of the world. I visited South Africa in 1969 as a representative of the Canadian Union of Students to meet with representatives of the National Union of South African Students. I want to talk briefly about the realities of South Africa at that time. It was possible to see those realities thanks to some courageous students who took me outside the normal white areas of Johannesburg and into the black township of Soweto to get a sense of the reality black people were living with at that time.

That reality included the most degrading poverty that anyone in this country could imagine. People lived in small tool-shed sized houses. Often there were eight or nine people in a dwelling the size of which we would use as a garden shed, all of this within sight of the most fabulously wealthy, most modern and up-to-date metropolis of Johannesburg. It has paved streets, magnificent buildings, and suburbs full of swimming pools. It is in a sense the ultimate in affluence. To fly into Johannesburg over the white suburbs is to be convinced that every single house has a large swimming pool and patio. There is a sense of tremendous wealth and affluence which contrasts so grimly with the life lived by the black people of Soweto. It is the difference between night and day.

● (1730)

I have to talk not just about the surface features, but about the chance that I had to visit a black school in Soweto and to hear from the principal of that school the incredible discrimination in economic matters which was being practised between his high school in Soweto and other schools of white children in other parts of the country. The inequality was so stark, as again to be night and day, as he put it to me.

Or I can tell you about the hospital which we visited in Soweto. It was so over crowded that even at that time, which was not a time of violence of a kind that we now see in South Africa, that people could simply not get into the hospital with serious ailments, with the most basic kinds of ailments which we take for granted that we can have treated in our hospitals here in this country.

I ask myself where are those young people now whom I met in 1969. I have to be sure that for many of them the frustrations, the night and day contrast between their life and the life of their white counterparts in their very same country, have put them behind the barricades that we see so dramatically illustrated on the news broadcast from South Africa these days.