

Routine Proceedings

in 1987 we were in the vanguard of world opinion when the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development was tabled. This was part of an ongoing contribution to overcome threats to the global environment. Now we can apply the same collective spirit and education to the world of science and see our world continue to improve.

I was hoping that the hon. minister would have spent a little more time on how Canada would be contributing in this theme of science in the Commonwealth but he did not.

In South Africa, sanctions have worked and we are witnessing the break-up of apartheid, something many of us thought we would never see. We must keep up that pressure and ensure that all the members of our commonwealth countries have the same rights to freedom and democracy that we enjoy right here in Canada.

There are other contributions the Commonwealth can make to the world. It includes almost one-quarter of the world's population and enough geography to have a real impact on ending the flow of illegal drugs internationally.

Through Official Development Assistance money we can ensure more education and health care for the other members of our family in the Commonwealth, though the recent budget cuts in that funding are weakening where we should be strengthening.

I wish to congratulate the hon. member for Northumberland for reminding the government that you do not cut back on the backs of the poor.

We are concerned about north-south relations. We must never forget our obligations as part of a large extended family. When one member of a family needs a hand, the other members must rally around and support the individual in order to support the whole family.

Today the world is looking for peace, good will, understanding and democracy. The people of the world want to live in health, wealth and security. We are part of the best role model in existence and have much experience to share internationally.

I hope we will continue to take our role internationally very seriously and will consistently work towards the betterment of the world and its people.

Mr. John Brewin (Victoria): Mr. Speaker, I rise on behalf of our party, including my colleague from Saskatoon—Dundurn, to put forward greetings and join with those of the other parties in this House on the occasion of Commonwealth Day 1991.

As has been noted, 60 years ago today the Statute of Westminster came into force and the British Commonwealth of Nations, as it was then called, came into existence.

The Commonwealth replaced, of course, the British Empire, the empire on which, it was said, the sun never set. The empire is, of course, at this stage of the review of history, somewhat maligned. But it should be understood that through that empire both hope as well as exploitation passed. The Commonwealth, as the empire before it, expanded the horizons of people around the world, not only at its centre but at its outer reaches.

Now, the Commonwealth, of course, is no longer British. In fact, in recent years, thanks to the lack of leadership of the British government under Margaret Thatcher, the active leadership of the Commonwealth passed from the United Kingdom to other countries.

The Commonwealth draws together people from 50 countries around the world. As much as has been said today by the minister on behalf of the government of the shared values of the Commonwealth, I suspect that that is somewhat exaggerated rhetoric when one looks at the reality of the Commonwealth. What is shared, simply, is a history. The values of the Commonwealth are not shared as well as they ought to be.

We see, for example, in the response to apartheid in South Africa, governments such as that of the United Kingdom failing to share the overwhelming consensus of other governments and people in the Commonwealth on how to deal with the evils of apartheid.

The Commonwealth itself suffers from deep divisions of wealth. Millions within the Commonwealth still live in abject poverty. Democratic freedoms are an illusion to too many within the Commonwealth. But it must be acknowledged that the Commonwealth, through the