

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, March 14, 1985

The House met at 11 a.m.

• (1105)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

BRETTON WOODS AGREEMENTS ACT

MEASURE TO AMEND

The House resumed from Wednesday, March 13, consideration of the motion of Mr. Hnatyshyn (for Mrs. McDougall) that Bill C-30, an Act to amend the Bretton Woods Agreements Act and to repeal the International Development Association Act and amend certain other Acts in consequence thereof, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, when the House adjourned yesterday evening, we had had a chance to inform Canadians about the problems facing developing countries and the measures that should be taken by this Government to help those countries. The International Monetary Fund does have a role to play but we must realize there are other agencies as well that have a specific role to play in this area and must do so if we are to have a stronger and more effective world economy.

[English]

When debate was terminated yesterday, I had had an opportunity to outline some of the areas in which past Liberal Governments in Canada had had an opportunity to play a major role on the international scene, particularly with respect to the North-South dialogue, the Cancun conference and the role of the former Prime Minister, Pierre Elliott Trudeau.

I think it is incumbent upon all of us that we not rest on the laurels of past administrations. I think it is extremely necessary that the Government take the lead in the area of international monetary equality. To that end, the International Monetary Fund has a very important role to play, but there are other mechanisms which in fact must be better utilized if we are to have a world economy that can flourish. I refer specifically to the role of UNCTAD in the negotiations to allow Third World and less developed countries to enter the more highly developed North American markets.

Because of the economic superiority of the consuming countries or the developed countries with respect to commodities,

the developed countries have tended to monopolize the areas of transportation, marketing distribution and processing of commodities. As a result, the underdeveloped countries receive only a small share of the final selling price. As a matter of fact, UNCTAD has estimated that if local semi-processing was used for 10 commodities in order to get them out of the raw material mentality, which unfortunately seems to characterize the current exporting approaches of this Government as well, they could provide to less developed nations 1.5 times their present earnings. That has not occurred primarily because barriers to such activities have been erected through tariff structures imposed by developed countries. I think the new Government will have to show to the Canadian people that it is taking some initiative and it should put this issue on the bargaining table at the "blarney summit" that is coming up this weekend for the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Mulroney) and the President of the United States.

I think it is clear that our roles and responsibilities extend beyond our own frontiers and beyond our own continent. They must reach out to those countries that are now trying to divest themselves of an incredible internal debt load and, through organisms and mechanisms like the International Monetary Fund, the Cancun conference and UNCTAD, are trying to have an opportunity to share in the massive world markets for commodities such as those I have just mentioned. Unfortunately, the activities of the first few months of this Government have indicated that the Government does not seem to have the same kind of vision of the world economy as past Liberal Governments. For example, I am thinking of the relevant Conservative commitments that were made during the election campaign to which I referred yesterday.

The Government has promised to review foreign policy, seeking input from the Canadian public, but at the same time the Government has put its good housekeeping seal of approval on a foreign policy which runs lock-step with that of the United States of America. Instead of going to the Canadian people and asking them if they want to have an independent cultural policy, an independent economic policy and an independent defence policy, the Government has made commitments which clearly indicate that its intentions are merely to mirror the kind of socio-economic policies and defence policies of our neighbour to the south.

• (1110)

[Translation]

When this Government was making its many promises during the election campaign, it also said there were going to be consultations with all Canadians on the economy and on our international relations with the International Monetary