

Official Development Aid

direct role the Canadian Government plays in that area by subsidizing our arms trade.

We have brought before this House on a number of occasions examples of where the Canadian Government has been supporting military trade with Chile. Military arms sold to that country are inevitably used in repressing dissent. Therefore, if we are to reach the objective of international aid, then we have to get this country out of the business of subsidizing the arms trade. We have to use those dollars to encourage companies to undertake other types of economic activity. We know from numerous studies that if companies get involved in other kinds of economic activities, they produce more jobs. We would get a better return for the public dollar invested.

It is important to remind the Government of the international goal of .7 per cent of GNP for international trade. It is important for this Government to be reminded that it needs to set its priorities on the basis of what Canadians want. I cannot quote any specific public opinion poll, but I know from talking to people in my community of Winnipeg that the vast majority of Canadians want action on international development. They want Canadians to be in the forefront of promoting justice on this planet through human development. The Government should be setting those priorities on the basis of what Canadians want rather than on the basis of some other set of priorities.

I think I see you signalling that my time is coming to a quick end, Mr. Speaker. I just want to say that I congratulate my colleague for having brought forward this resolution. It is a creative idea for bringing home to this Government the fact that it needs to place a much higher priority on international development and that Canadians want it to do so. It is the responsibility of the Government to respond and this is a creative way of saying that.

● (1840)

Mr. Reginald Stackhouse (Scarborough West): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Member who has introduced this motion which focuses our attention on one of the most compelling issues that confront humanity. As so often happens, perhaps the most important subject that the House will debate today has been the program for Private Member's Hour. I thank the Member and those associated with him who have made this the primary concern of all of us during this hour together. It is right for them to remind us that the people of Canada share this concern with all of us.

One of the results of the recently concluded study of foreign policy by the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations has been the high priority which the subject of external affairs enjoys throughout the land. It is a priority that has not always been measured within these walls. It has often been assumed that nobody in Canada really cares about foreign policy. That may have been true at one time, but we live in the age of the global village and our people are fully conscious of their belonging to one world. Therefore, people are fully aware of the need for Canada to address the problems

of the world if we are to do justice to our own needs as a nation.

I welcome this opportunity to discuss foreign aid and overseas development. I have to put before the House a concern that the presenter of the motion, and the Member who spoke in support of it, have been guilty nonetheless of certain fallacies; one of them being the fallacy of not relating the necessity to generate wealth in order to provide humanitarian assistance and social development.

One of the most striking fallacies of which we can be guilty of in this chamber is the failure to recognize the need to generate adequate wealth if we are to afford those programs and services without which our life as a people would be poorer, and without which the life of the human race throughout the world would be poorer. It amazes me to hear Members on the other side of the House urge on us one spending program after another, and at the same time oppose efforts that are designed to increase the wealth of this country so that we can possibly afford those spending programs. We often become very superior and very sophisticated about business, industry and commerce. These are in contrast to the intellectual, the cultural, the social activities which are so much more worthy of the mind and the spirit of men and women.

I have to draw to your attention that one Member of the House earlier this afternoon was pleading for funds for the erection of a ballet theatre in the City of Toronto. Now, without the kind of wealth that we hope our burgeoning, booming economy can generate how would such a cultural centre ever be a possibility? We have to keep that in mind whenever we are tempted to close our eyes to the priority of economic concerns. That is equally true when we are talking about overseas aid and foreign development.

The only way by which this country can possibly have the surplus to share with the underdeveloped, with the have-not nations of the world, is by sufficiently generating the wealth that provides that surplus. If all we can produce in this country is that which is required for our subsistence and survival as a people, we have nothing to share. It is only when we have a booming economy, it is only when we have our deficit under control, it is only when we have an economically sound country that we can possibly have something to share with other countries.

I would hope that in the interests of human betterment and overseas aid we would find support for our deficit control policies for they are designed to give us, once again, the surplus that can lift the level of life in this country, and lift the level of life beyond our borders. I point out that our first need as a people, as a parliament, as a government, is to generate the wealth without which our progress as people will be impossible. That is the first fallacy that I noted in the remarks.

The second fallacy is the fallacy of being insensitive to the need for recognizing that simply spending money overseas can be as unproductive as spending it at home. Mention was made