

United Nations

action, and if the total of the contributions is sufficient to make a reasonable and workable program on a sound economic basis, the Canadian government, subject to parliamentary approval, is prepared to increase its contribution to the 1954 expanded program of technical assistance from \$800,000, as it was in 1953, up to a maximum of one million five hundred thousand dollars (United States). I should further add that if the total of contributions falls below what we regard as reasonable, the Canadian contribution would be reduced accordingly.

It is our hope that when the pledging conference meets in two weeks time, the response from delegations will be such as to ensure the continuance at the maximum possible efficiency of what we regard as one of the most valuable contributions the United Nations has so far made to international economic co-operation and progress.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, I believe the Canadian government has already taken substantial steps in the spirit of this resolution. Subject to the approval of parliament we are proposing that we practically double our contribution to the technical assistance fund.

Technical assistance means the sharing with underdeveloped countries of the advanced knowledge and skills of the industrialized and more highly developed countries. The idea of international technical assistance on a large scale is relatively new. It was proposed first by President Truman in his inaugural address to congress in 1949. I expect to refer to this matter later in my remarks. This suggestion was quickly taken up by the United Nations, which organized an expanded program of technical assistance in 1950.

There are various arguments one might use to support technical assistance in underdeveloped countries. I think the one that comes to mind first, in fact the most important one, is on ethical and moral grounds. The rich countries should be prepared to help the countries with lower standards of living, so that their standards of living can be raised.

We have already heard in the house figures showing the difference in real income as between rich countries and very poor countries in the world. Those contrasts are indeed very striking, and they underline the necessity of being ready to help these people. I think it is also important to point out how the life expectancy in developed countries compares with that in the underdeveloped. In Canada and the United States a child may look forward to an average life of 60-plus years. In the underdeveloped countries an average life expectancy is in the neighbourhood of 30 years. By improving their living conditions we should be able greatly to increase their life expectancy.

The measure of the poverty in much of the world is best understood not by figures but

[Mr. Robertson.]

by descriptions. I have read that in parts of Africa over 90 per cent of the people are infected by one or more kinds of worms. This shows a great need for modern health standards. Seven per cent of the world's people enjoy 40 per cent of the income, whereas another 54 per cent of the people enjoy only 13 per cent of the income.

More than that, there is a strong tendency for extremes of poverty and affluence to diverge. That is, rich countries, with their great capabilities, tend to get richer while poor countries, with no technical skills, tend to become even poorer. And I do believe that in many of these so-called impoverished nations there is an even greater cleavage between the classes living in those countries. We find a small minority of very rich people while the great majority live in abject misery.

I remember one of the most striking occasions at the meeting of the United Nations I attended was a speech delivered by a delegate from one of these underdeveloped countries. As I remember his remarks he said, "In our country it is not a matter of enjoying some little luxury. It is more a matter of finding a crust of bread for a starving son, or finding some simple drug to relieve the agonies of death of a loving mother".

I would stress again that the main reason for helping underdeveloped countries is the moral one. Nevertheless, political considerations do enter into the question. These, we will admit, are possibly of a selfish nature but, in our present international situation, it must be admitted that they are realistic.

On motion of Mr. Robertson the debate was adjourned.

RESEARCH**PROMOTION AND ACCELERATION OF ACTIVITIES
—WITHDRAWAL OF MOTION**

On the order:

Notice of motion: Mr. Murphy (Lambton West)—That, in the opinion of this house, the government should consider the advisability of setting up a special committee representative of all parties, with the power to call witnesses and send for documents and papers for the purpose of examining and reporting upon the advisability of providing inducements to promote and accelerate activities in the field of research.

Mr. J. W. Murphy (Lambton West): Mr. Speaker, before you call it six o'clock may I have the consent of the house to have my motion withdrawn from the order paper?