

EXTERNAL AID—REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE
FOR FRENCH SPEAKING COUNTRIES

Mr. Bernard Dumont (Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, in asking a question concerning increased help to French-speaking countries, I wanted to call the attention of the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to a problem which exists in African countries, among others. At the present time, the average annual income in those countries is only \$115, whereas in the rich countries of this same French-speaking community it is \$1,714.

What strikes us, however, is that following the interparliamentary conference held in Paris, a Canadian representative assured us that the \$8 million difference in Canadian help to British commonwealth countries and to French-speaking countries would disappear in 1969. We hope that this project will be carried out.

Before our departure from Africa, we had the opportunity to see what is being done by the Chevrier mission packed with money and fine promises, reminding Africans that we also speak the beautiful French language from British Columbia to Newfoundland.

I would now like to point out, Mr. Speaker, that when French-speaking countries can come into contact with the French culture, they are able to improve considerably their trading operations with other countries. In fact, what especially contributed to assure the success of the Canadian mission is that it enjoyed plenipotentiary powers. The decisions were taken on the spot. The African authorities were quite pleasantly surprised to be able to conclude in a few days agreements on 49 new projects, among which assistance to Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, The Cameroons, Ivory Coast, Niger and Senegal. However, if that assistance is to remain efficient, those people will have to be in a position to use the French telecommunications services, so that they may communicate with all those countries, because the lack of French short waves seriously hinders communications in French-speaking countries.

An enormous quantity of transistors are spreading over one third of the world at the present time. And still much more important, in five years at the most, satellites will assure long-distance communications. Now, according to technicians, there is room for not more than 72 satellites around the earth. On account of the considerable lead taken by the two space giants, the Americans and the Russians, the available wave lengths are scarce and the saturation point seems to be near.

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As the unit regulations require that a country apply for its wave-lengths only two years before a satellite is launched, there is the danger that the satellites of tomorrow will be American or Russian, which would reduce to very little the cultural progress achieved by francophone countries in the last ten years, at the cost of great effort.

I have here a press release which I wrote; it proves that if it is possible to protect French culture through co-operation with all francophone countries, we have a duty to do so. In fact, in the majority of developing French-speaking countries, material which Quebec industrialists could supply is very sorely needed. That is why communications in French must become possible, for if use of that language is not maintained, considerable erosion would follow in those francophone countries.

As a result of the study we were able to make during a visit to Paris with the delegates to the interparliamentary conference, we saw that France now has at its Chantilly base—which we visited—a satellite which could guarantee all African francophone countries communications in French.

The satellite "Symphonie" could, even in Canada, broadcast from Halifax to Banff, thus reaching all the French-speaking minorities. In addition, if that satellite were located on the equator, it would be possible to broadcast French programs as far as South Africa. Besides, following those meetings, I would like to inform the house about the results of the work we did, which is greatly encouraging for all those French-speaking countries, including Canada.

It must be remembered that here, even if salaries are higher than in the African countries, Canada has 300,000 unemployed, 150,000 of them in Quebec, and if the co-operation kindly offered by France to reach all those African countries through its satellite is rejected, Canada will be responsible.

Last week the board received a message to the effect that the communications satellite from Halifax to Banff could broadcast in French not only in Canada but in all the countries of Africa, to allow for that exchange of ideas which would lead to increased trade in the future.

I will end my remarks by reading the press release issued about the opportunities for development in those French-speaking countries.

The meetings of the two ethnic groups, French and Canadian, make it possible to hope that the relations between France and Canada will increase