

Area Program Summaries

I say to all members of this House, regardless of where they stand on the subject matter, that it is time they stood up and were counted and told this government to let us know what is going on.

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): Is the House ready for the question?

Some hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): The question is on motion No. 15. All those in favour of the said motion will please say yea.

Some hon. Members: Yea.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): All those opposed will please say nay.

Some hon. Members: Nay.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): In my opinion the nays have it.

And more than five members having risen:

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): According to special order made earlier this day, the division on this motion is deferred until 5.30 p.m. today. We will now proceed to notice of motion No. 30.

COPIES OF AREA PROGRAM SUMMARIES FOR 1972-75

The House resumed, from Thursday, October 16, consideration of the motion of Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich):

That an order of the House do issue for copies of the Area Program Summaries for the years 1972-73, 1973-74 and 1974-75, covering such areas as Commonwealth Africa, South America, Francophone Africa, and any other area breakdowns for which Area Programs have been prepared.

Mr. Douglas Roche (Edmonton-Strathcona): Mr. Speaker, I want to review briefly the purpose of this motion introduced by my colleague, the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro). It asks that the government produce area program summaries of the Canadian International Development Agency for specific years. It is very clear that what the hon. member is asking for is not studies of what CIDA is contemplating or papers relating to delicate negotiations that it is carrying on with countries which may be helped by CIDA; what is being asked for are area program summaries of actual ongoing programs that have been funded by the House of Commons and for which members of parliament have a responsibility.

We want these papers because the CIDA budget is now \$933 million for this fiscal year, and according to the intention of the government to follow through with the strategy of international development co-operation for the five years 1975 to 1980, our budget for CIDA will grow to .7 per cent of the gross national product. With normal escalation for the next fiscal year, the figure will go to over \$1 billion. When that figure is introduced, I predict that the public will become quite concerned about how the money

is being spent at a time of restraint in our society. It is not that we begrudge the normal escalation of the CIDA budget, but at this time it is imperative that we assure ourselves, as members of the public and as members of this House of Commons with responsibility for funding, that the money is well spent and that public support is maintained for the CIDA program.

Obviously, members of parliament cannot travel all over the world to look at 2,000 projects in 76 countries. It is just impossible for us to examine the effectiveness of those programs. But we need more than the publicity material put out by CIDA to make a judgment on the worthiness of those projects. We need a criterion of judgment to fulfil our responsibilities. We need to be able to assure the Canadian people that with respect to this large budget, which is going to get bigger—and I speak as one in favour of its getting larger—the money is being well spent. We need to have a criterion of judgment, and that is what the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich has sought through this motion.

We find, however, that there is a record of CIDA being rather closed in its disclosure of operating procedures. This fact concerned members of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence and the new subcommittee on international development. When the Price-Waterhouse management study was commissioned a couple of years ago, it was denied to members of parliament and particularly to members of the committee who had to pass the appropriations for CIDA on the ground that it was an internal matter. Last spring my request for papers relating to CIDA's five-year strategy was denied. Now my colleague is to be denied the area program summaries of ongoing programs. We must ask ourselves, why is CIDA refusing to give to members of this House documentation to which we have a right; documents we need in order to fulfil our responsibilities?

● (1720)

Mr. Paproski: They are hiding something.

Mr. Roche: Last March, the previous parliamentary secretary said, when refusing the motion, that the production of these papers regarding CIDA might be detrimental to the future conduct of Canadian foreign relations. That is an interesting statement. Not only was it rubbish, but it was not even supported by the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Lapointe) who spoke first in the debate last week on behalf of the government. He suggested that the area program documents are part of a whole and that they take into account historical and economic data relating to our programs in these other countries.

This is precisely my point, Mr. Speaker. Because these area program summaries are part of the whole picture of how Canada establishes programs in the first place, it is absolutely essential that they be made available to us in order that we may judge how these programs are actually working. I wish hon. members opposite would get their stories straight. Are we being refused these documents because their production would be detrimental to our foreign relations, or are they being refused because it is felt that members of parliament cannot be trusted with working papers to do with ongoing programs? If the latter is correct, namely, that we cannot be trusted, I can only