

Adjournment Debate

because I support that concept and programs of Canada's international assistance that I must have the assurance; indeed my responsibilities as a member of parliament demand that I have this assurance that the operation of CIDA is proper and beneficial.

As a member of parliament I receive lots of objections from constituents about the increasing amounts of foreign aid. These complaints understandably increase when raging inflation and increasing unemployment are dislocating the domestic economy and causing hardship at home.

I am willing to continue standing up for CIDA and international assistance, but I do not want the rug pulled out from under me by revelations of mismanagement that cast reflections not only on CIDA but on my defence of CIDA. If there is not mismanagement why has the president of CIDA refused to release a management study done by an outside consulting firm?

I am stating bluntly that we had better start hearing the facts about CIDA from the source itself, rather than depending on newspaper accounts, or there is bound to be a blowup from all this pressure. Many Canadians are resentful that we seem to be helping countries now able to take care of themselves. I have been puzzled by conflicting statements by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. MacEachen) and by the president of CIDA on the future of Canadian aid programs to oil rich countries.

We need to know if the direct capital assistance of \$84 million to Algeria, Nigeria and Indonesia will be phased out, since these countries are now oil producers. We need to know if CIDA intends to loan \$10 million to Cuba at the maximum concessionality, that is no interest and repayment over 50 years starting in the 10th year. Why is a communist country getting such a break? We need to know how CIDA's programs are related to the export branch of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce.

I have cited these examples of questions to show where a special inquiry should start. It is not isolated cases of bad judgment that should concern us as much as whether CIDA has the capacity to meet new challenges brought on by the "global emergency" of which the U.N. Secretary General warns us. The Special U.N. conferences last year on raw resources, population and food all had a common denominator; the interlocking relationship of the global problems of mass poverty, famine, population growth, the arms race, and unequal distribution of energy.

These conferences have helped us to see that the fundamental issue in the world is the inequalities between the rich minority and the poor majority. We are slowly learning that a billion people in the oil poor countries are suffering hunger and malnutrition; 20 per cent of the world's population consumes 75 per cent of the energy and resources, and developing countries pay more on debt servicing than they get in aid.

These are profound facts calling for openness and flexibility by the developed nations. The developing nations are on an irreversible march toward economic liberation. The key to peace is thus found in closing the rich-poor gap. Foreign aid programs are simply inadequate to this enlarged task.

Therefore the inquiry I seek would investigate not only the operation and the value of CIDA programs, but would relate them to our policies affecting the United Nations, trade and monetary reform, so that we would have an over-all, consistent policy by Canada toward the developing world. When I raised these points in the Commons last Thursday, during a debate on new tariffs affecting developing nations, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) said he agreed with me.

It is not only an opposition MP who should be calling for this comprehensive review. We ought to hear this call from the government, from the non-governmental organizations that have so much at stake in government policies, from the churches, education and community leaders who want our country to do the right thing in a world where new demands for justice require more than the charity of the rich. We ought to hear this call from the president of CIDA himself, for no one in Canada knows better than he that in a suffering world it is intolerable to have the good name of CIDA under a cloud.

Mr. Herb Breau (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to hear that any review the hon. member would be part of, and any criticism he would have of CIDA would be of a positive nature to improve the organization, therefore helping it and the government to have a better program of international development. The minister in his answer this afternoon never expressed any doubt about that, and we hope that that is what hon. members opposite have in mind.

The minister answered the hon. member's question this afternoon by saying that in a matter of four or five weeks the estimates of CIDA, as with all estimates of the government, will be referred to standing committees.

I certainly agree with the hon. member that any criticisms which are brought up in newspaper articles or by hon. members should be answered. The question is whether these criticisms and these questions justify a special parliamentary inquiry. A special parliamentary inquiry takes the time of a committee. This particular committee will be sitting in any case in a matter of a few weeks, as I just said. There are many items which should be brought before this and other committees. Some of the hon. member's colleagues, for example, are requesting a reference of NORAD to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence. I have been a party to discussions leading up to that, and I hope it will be referred by the House very shortly.

We believe that in this case the committee can wait until the first weeks of March when all estimates of the government will be referred. At that time the hon. member, as well as others, and the public through the media can raise questions, and all these questions hopefully will be answered in a satisfactory manner. I can only repeat the minister's answer of this afternoon that we do not believe that a special inquiry in this instance is necessary or justifiable, and that the House can wait until referral of the estimates in March.