

*External Affairs*

must be very much in the mind of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, although he made no reference to it in his statement.

Then there is the whole question of the policy of economic assistance to underdeveloped countries and the recent indication that the Soviet union, in this aspect, is on a great peacetime offensive. The hon. member for Vancouver East pointed out that one of the things that is required in the world today, and that Canada should do, is to provide positive leadership in many respects. The Secretary of State for External Affairs stated that Canada was moving beyond the role of the honest broker; that Canada was taking an independent position. I am one of those who feel that an independent position at many times, for a nation the size of Canada, a nation with the prestige of ours, is indispensable. I do feel we need more than an independent position; we need an independent position based on courage, based on ability to lead the world, to lead nations of our size, in such a direction as to bring about greater understanding amongst the nations and in such a way as to lift economic standards throughout the world, and in such a way as to bring about world peace.

The Canadian government has said through various ministers, and through the Prime Minister, that we are in favour of equal rights for people irrespective of race, colour or creed. That is the general position that is taken. Yet when it came to a specific motion criticizing apartheid in South Africa, Canada, in that context, I suggest, did not take an independent position. Canada, I suggest, at that time did not take a courageous position. We should have been prepared to stand up and vote against racial discrimination on the ground that, no matter the excuse, it is something that can never be condoned. The government should have been prepared to take a consistent stand.

Something of the attitude of the government has been brought forward because of a certain well known, and I think respected organization in this country which presented a document to the government dealing with many important questions of international and domestic affairs. This document contained a strong condemnation, not only of racial discrimination but of anything bordering neutralism or inability or unwillingness to stand up and be counted. This statement contained a sentence which stated that the views of that organization were so strong that rather than accept within the commonwealth this kind of racial discrimination it would be better if South Africa were outside the commonwealth. The Prime Minister, who is an extremely able, cagy and crafty politician,

[Mr. Argue.]

took but a moment to decide that one sentence in this presentation was one that he could latch upon to make headlines. This he did with great success, but also side-stepped the whole question of Canada's position at the United Nations with regard to this question and side-stepped the very important economic proposals and other principles enunciated in that document.

I do not want to see any nation that is today within the commonwealth leave the commonwealth of nations. I feel that this loose association of nations, many of whom are experiencing the freedom and the joy of the democratic process for the first time, is something unique in the affairs of the world and something very valuable. But I do believe that the respect of one man for his brother, the respect of people of one colour for persons of another colour, and the courage to support equality and freedom in that regard, is more important, much more important, than keeping every single last one of these loosely knit nations within this association if such could not be accomplished by any other means. As has been said so often in this house, more eloquently than anything I am able to say, it is a fact that even within the commonwealth the vast majority of the citizens are non-white, so even from a practical standpoint, and that is not a standpoint for which I, of course, press consideration, it is another strong argument for taking a firm position, a position consistent with the statement of the Prime Minister and other members of the government, to the point that we are prepared at the United Nations and in other councils of the world to stand up and be counted when the vote is called.

The problem of the refugees of the world is something that appeals, I believe, to the good will and generosity of Canadian citizens. Canada has made a gesture in this regard, and I think it is only a gesture. We have admitted into Canada some 100 families of refugees within whom there is an incidence of tuberculosis. This action has been taken at a time when 2,700 beds in tuberculosis sanatoria in Canada are empty. The action of the government was greeted with a great amount of publicity and fanfare. I am not objecting to that. When the refugees came into Canada, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration (Mrs. Fairclough) met them at Malton airport and received the benefit of a tremendous amount of publicity. There was a lot of kudos going to the federal government.

I understand, however, that after the federal government had agreed to have these families come to Canada a letter went out