

I. THE CANADIAN INTEREST IN INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE*

A. The Rationale for Canadian Involvement

(i) The most fundamental, durable and important reason for Canada assisting less-developed countries is a concern for "international social justice". This concern is a natural outgrowth of basic Canadian values of parallel, domestic priorities and of Canada's particular position as "one of the most international of nations". (5-6)

(ii) While recognizing that Canada itself is still a developing country, with its own less-developed regions, the Subcommittee sees no conflict between the tasks of development at home and abroad. On the contrary, the two goals are totally intertwined and spring from the same motivation. (7-8)

(iii) The Subcommittee recognizes a number of other important and urgent reasons for Canadian aid to developing countries: a) There can be no durable peace or stability on the planet as long as the gulf between rich and poor is allowed to persist or widen; b) The long-term economic welfare of all countries will also be closely interrelated, so that all will benefit from economic progress in developing countries; c) Canada's credibility, prestige and effectiveness as a member of the community of nations will hinge to an important extent on the acceptance of its responsibilities in the collective effort to promote human welfare. (9-12)

(iv) Other specific Canadian interests are also served by the development assistance programme. Canadian knowledge of different regions of the world is expanded, an impetus is provided to Canadian exporters of goods and services, and there are new outlets for the expression of the bilingual and bicultural nature of the country. (13)

(v) All of these specific interests are real and legitimate so long as they do not distract Canadian attention from the central task. The promotion of "social and economic development" in developing countries. The Subcommittee welcomes the Government's acceptance of this goal as "the primary objective of the Canadian development assistance programme"—which sets a high standard against which future efforts may be judged. (14)

(vi) The Subcommittee welcomes the explicit acknowledgement that the greatest share of effort is being borne by the developing countries themselves. The aid of developed countries, while marginal in quantitative terms, is important as a catalyst. (15-17)

(vii) The commitment to help developing countries to help themselves cannot be discharged by mere "hand-outs". It involves a sustained effort,—even some sacrifices—by developed countries to allow the developing countries fair opportunities in the global economic system. (18-19)

B. Public Interest and Support

(i) The policy of expanding international development assistance enjoys the general support of the Canadian people, although the Subcommittee is deeply concerned that much of this support is somewhat passive and acquiescent in the face of government-to government programmes which often seem complex and remote. (20-22)

(ii) To maintain and reinforce the support of Canadians and to avert a "weakening of will" in this area, vigorous new efforts at public education and involvement will be required. (23)

(iii) The Subcommittee is pleased that this has been accepted as one of the main priorities by the new President of CIDA. It will involve not only stepping up CIDA's own information programmes but continued and expanded indirect support of the public education activities of non-governmental organizations and community groups. (23-25)

(iv) Above all education and involvement problems must now stress the urgency, magnitude and complexity of the international development problem. (26)

C. The Level of Development Assistance

(i) With some qualifications, the Subcommittee has concluded that the setting of "aid targets" (particularly those recommended by the Pearson Commission) is basically a valid and useful technique for mobilizing efforts nationally and internationally. A primary objective is to achieve stable flows of resources. The suggested minimum should not be viewed as a maximum. (27-30)

(ii) Against the background of declining aid expenditures by several major donors, Canada's quantitative aid "performance" assumes considerable importance. As the Policy paper states, "Canada's example can at this time make a significant difference in the precarious balance in which the future of the entire development enterprise is now poised". (31-32)

(iii) The Government is committed to "regular and dependable" growth in its aid expenditures "to move toward the internationally-accepted targets". On the basis of its own calculations, and available projections of G.N.P., the Subcommittee has concluded that if the Government maintains the rate of increase set in 1971-72 (approximately 16.5%), Canada could come very close to achieving the .7% target in the 1975-76 appropriations. The Subcommittee accordingly recommends that the Government maintain the rate of increase in CIDA allocations set in 1971-72 with a view to achieving the .7% target as a minimum by 1975-76. (37, 39-41)

(iv) The "lag" between allocations and disbursements of Canadian development assistance appears to be transitional in nature and is now being overcome. A certain "lag" or "pipeline" is normal and unavoidable, although changes suggested in this report could produce further improvements. (42)

* Each of the highlights here is followed by a reference to the relevant paragraph numbers in the Main Report.