

Nations by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Clark) in September, 1984. He said that we are still committed to .7 of 1 per cent. He was greatly applauded. Everyone said that this was a country which understood its commitment, it is in difficulty and yet reaffirms its commitment. They said that was the kind of Canada they liked. Suddenly we say that .7 is difficult and we will make it .6 until 1990. However, it is now .6 until 1995. I am afraid it is going to be .5 by 1995. When you have no goal or vision, it is easier to reduce your commitments.

I suppose that the intention of my colleague from the New Democratic Party today is to ask Members to recommit themselves publicly, to say that regardless of the difficulty they have noticed that Canadians are way ahead of them and that they are recommitting themselves to that goal. I beg of you not to reduce our commitment. We must not postpone what we strongly believe. There are only six Members left in my Party who sat under Pearson. You would, therefore, understand that I am more committed than others because I have followed his policy ever since.

I am not laying blame. I am only begging people to understand. Regardless of how many pockets of poverty there are in our country and regardless of how much temporary difficulty we may have, there is no better country in the world in which to live than Canada. I said that last Friday when I spoke on the emergency debate on South Africa. People expect leadership from Canada on the issue of apartheid in South Africa. People expect leadership from us. The Government's own polls show that. The youth of the country are committed. They understand the commitment. They will pay taxes much longer than us.

There is no doubt that we can link aid and disarmament. We must understand that any country to which Canada is providing leadership is going through much greater difficulty than Canada has ever known. We must understand that those we help and co-operate with today are the partners of tomorrow. That is something to reflect on. You do not throw money away. You do not exchange technology. You create future partnerships with people who have less than you. That is the message for those who are strictly business-oriented. I am not, but I am practical. I understand that for some people that is their commitment. I think of them as future partners in development for people who have nothing.

● (1830)

Please, I beg of Members to understand the meaning of the resolution put forward by my friend, which is to publicly recommit ourselves to that goal. It should remain the goal of Canada.

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I welcome the opportunity to participate in this debate. I thank my colleague for having introduced the motion. It is very timely and worth while. The idea of introducing legislation to set aid levels is interesting and unique. Obviously it is no guarantee that Governments will set appropriate targets. All

we need do is look at the present debate on Established Programs Financing.

The Government is moving in the direction of cutting back on transfer payments to the provinces for education, health and human development in Canada. In fact the Government has just moved closure on that legislation, so it is moving very quickly in that direction. However, even though it is possible for a mean-spirited Government whose priorities are not well placed to ignore the human development needs on this globe, that does not mean that legislation like this would not be a useful vehicle in setting goals for international aid. It would certainly give these programs more permanency than they have right now.

The goal of .7 per cent of GNP for international aid was set by the UN so it is an international goal. We should associate ourselves with it in order to show solidarity with the aspirations of all peoples around the globe for the development of the individual and community. It is a minimal obligation to which we can tie ourselves.

The most striking aspect of international development aid, at least to me, is the comparison between the amount of money we spend in that direction compared with the amount we spend on armaments. If we could transfer but a fraction of the money we spend on arms to spending on human development and international aid, we could make a real difference. We could improve the quality of the accommodation people live in and the quality of water they drink. We could eradicate forever a number of diseases with just a fraction of the money which goes to armaments. To move money from our military budgets to our development budgets requires that we find ways to resolve peacefully those conflicts which break out on this planet.

While it is important for us to urge the Government to adopt the goal of .7 per cent of GNP for international aid, it is also important to impress upon people the need to provide leadership in peaceful conflict resolution. It is only when we have found the means for resolving conflicts among nations in a peaceful way that people will feel comfortable about putting down their arms. Therefore, this Government should be taking a direct leadership role on the international stage in order to promote conflict resolution.

Another area of interest is the involvement of Canadians in the international arms race. Not only are private companies selling arms on the international market, arms which are bought by military dictatorships and used to repress their people and block human development, more than that, our tax dollars are supporting that kind of trade. My tax dollars, your tax dollars, the tax dollars of those watching this program tonight go to support the arms trade. We are investing public funds in companies so that they can further promote the sale of arms on the international market. This is tragic to say the least. It is obscene. The Government has announced legislation dealing with pornography; it is too bad it did not have the vision to think of the obscene international arms trade and the