

Mr. Girve Fretz (Erie): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to participate in this debate today. I also want to say it was a privilege for me to serve on the North-South Parliamentary Task Force, to be involved in the hearings and to listen to the many fine presentations which were made to the task force. I wish to pay tribute to the hon. member for Edmonton South (Mr. Roche), who is not in the House at the present time. He has made many contributions in this House and, indeed, across the country with regard to Canada's role in aid and development, and to the entire theme of external affairs.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Fretz: One of the most important things which impressed me was the role of the non-government organizations. The task force heard many people from these organizations. They play a very important role in projecting Canada to the many parts of the world. The self-sacrificing manner in which they work is to be commended. I am impressed by the non-government organizations in our country.

Along with four other members of the task force I was privileged to visit some countries in Asia in February. I was able to view first hand some of the work involved in aid and development, for we had the privilege of visiting the Philippines, Bangladesh and Singapore. I saw the development and aid projects which are taking place in these countries. We were able to talk with Canadians and to see the kind of work they were doing. The enthusiasm generated among them was self-evident. I returned from the trip being supremely proud that I am Canadian and proud of the work that Canada is doing overseas.

One of the recommendations our task force made was that there should be greater parliamentary input into the North-South debate. I am pleased to have the opportunity to do that today. There must also be input from members of Parliament. Members of Parliament must have the opportunity to travel, to see first hand the projects in which Canada is involved. We need to be able to question the people who are there in order to find out what is happening.

I believe that there is a grave danger that the party to my left, the New Democratic Party, and other socialist parties and their leaders, will try to turn legitimate problems regarding relations among nations into an instrument for promoting international socialism. That frightens me because I believe there is a danger of distorting the real needs of people in the world into the cause of world socialism. If the North-South dialogue is subverted into a tool of international socialism, an instrument to wage peace—another form of warfare—then this will only contribute to the conflict among the superpowers rather than assist the poor people of the world.

The NDP motion which is before us today was moved soon after the leader of that party returned from a mission abroad—perhaps it was "Mission Impossible". The critics and the cynics say that he went because of his unpopular support of the Prime Minister's constitutional proposals. They say he went because of his need to regain his popularity and his prestige as party leader, not only among his caucus but among

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members of his party as a whole. Rather, he went abroad, or perhaps amiss, as the vice-president of Socialist International.

The hon. member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent) met for more than four hours with President Castro, one of the Prime Minister's pals. But it was a secret meeting and reporters were forced to stay in a hotel. The *Ottawa Citizen* reported that the NDP leader obtained astonishing insight into the communist leader. *The Globe and Mail* reported that he said secret meetings were extremely important and extremely useful. In the name of freedom of information, let the leader of the New Democratic Party, who was in the House earlier to report to Parliament about his trip, tell us what took place with Mr. Castro. What offers did Castro make toward him? Did he invite Castro to participate in the economic development of the Caribbean and Latin America? We also know that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) never reports in this House about the trips he makes either.

Complexity makes understanding all the ramifications surrounding the so-called North-South dialogue almost impossible because such an immense topic covers subject matters such as the recycling of the OPEC surplus, the proposed changes in the gearing ratio of the World Bank and the allocation of special drawing rights. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that too often the whole question of the North-South dialogue is boiled down to a simple controversy over foreign aid. In these difficult economic times, when so many western nations are faced with double digit inflation and high unemployment, foreign aid is viewed with disfavour and increased foreign aid is viewed with extreme distaste.

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In perspective, though, it can be easily seen that the target for foreign aid recommended by the North-South task force, of which I was a member, is not excessive. We argued that official development assistance should rise to .7 per cent of gross national product by 1990. When one discovers that federal support for the arts in Canada, a worthwhile venture in itself, amounts to 2 per cent of gross national product, the amount budgeted for official development assistance is seen to be quite reasonable, especially when such moneys are targeted to providing the following: clean water, health services and education. These three are simple necessities to the hundreds of millions in the Third World who are bereft of what we in Canada view as our inalienable right. However, although the contribution of foreign aid to the alleviation of human suffering should not be minimized, it is but a small part of the solution to North-South relations.

Another part of the solution is provided by the many individual Canadians who have been moved by humanitarian concerns to share generously with those less fortunate. This caring is represented not only by financial contributions but by contributions of time, energy and experience. These Canadians are members of the over 200 independent non-governmental organizations known as NGOs involved in assisting development in the Third World. The organizations range from small, effective groups such as Match International, which involves