

S.O. 30

The island nation is in trouble. It is not a time for Canada to cry out in condemnation of anything other than the brutal massacre of its Prime Minister, the brutalities inflicted upon him in the hours and days shortly before his death. We will learn of these things as the truth comes out. They are not fit subject matter to be discussed in the context of the debate tonight.

I want the people of Grenada to know that I share in their grief. I also share in what I know to be their joy, their relief in not having to live under Hudson Austin, self-styled "General"—killer, in my judgment. Because I know them, I know they are free people. They have been steeped in democracy. They are the students of British history, the product of British history and concern just as we are in Canada. What we do from here on in will mark whether or not Canadians deserve some of the charges being levelled against them in the Caribbean today.

I regret that we are being condemned for having abandoned the Caribbean. I say to my Caribbean friends that we have not abandoned them, nor will Canadians or decent free people anywhere in the world. We will support them; indeed we must support them. That is our responsibility.

The charges can and I believe will be refuted, not nearly as much by our words as they will by our actions. Grenadians today need medical supplies, food and clothing. I ask the Government whether plans are now in progress to meet those needs. It is the least we can do.

I was dismayed earlier last week when on two occasions I asked Canada to extend where necessary visas, student visas, or working permits to Grenadians in our country, where there might be a chance, against the uncertainty of their having to leave Canada because their visas, permits or authorities had run out. I regret that we were silent about that. I apologize to Grenadians in Canada because we would not even take that one little step. In the final analysis, I know that such extensions would have been granted, but it would have eased the anxiety of people who may have been facing that situation had that been stated. As the senior Commonwealth country in the western hemisphere, we might have said to Grenadians wherever they may have been around the world: "If you have to leave where you are and do not want to go home yet because of the instability and uncertainty, you are welcome in our country; please come". We did not do that. I extend to the family and friends of Maurice Bishop the deepest sympathies of Polly and myself. They will always have our prayers.

● (2250)

I want to join with my Leader in one other area before I sit down. I suppose that with all the uncertainty only time will prove whether there is a right decision or a wrong decision. I only know that when friends need help I like to help them. To say that the United States of America invaded Grenada out of hand on the basis of no solid information is wrong. We do not know whether they went in as a very deliberate act of responsibility in response to a clear invitation from the Governor General of Grenada, Paul Scoon.

I suggest that all the flaming rhetoric and America bashing is out of order at this time and I would reject it. I do not know the facts but it is my understanding from contacts that I have in the eastern Caribbean that in fact they did respond to an invitation. Church leaders have advised me that they are satisfied that the intervention was a direct response to a direct invitation from the Governor General who, I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, is a fairly responsible person. I want to make that point.

Time will sort out the facts for us. This bashing does not serve the best interests of Grenada nor any of those tiny islands, Grenadine, St. Vincent, Barbados, Antigua, Nevis or St. Kitts that lie in the chain. It does not serve their best interests or our best interests or human interests to run around bashing others for having taken action. Whatever the motivation of the United States of America, and this we will learn as time goes by, I plead with all Hon. Members to remember that Grenada is a tiny nation. It must now restore itself. It must choose what it wants to do but it needs our help. It needs peace, it needs quiet, it needs time. Let us give it that time and assist in any way we can.

I believe we should go to the island and lend whatever assistance we can, not as peace-keepers but perhaps as truce observers, if you will. It is the farmers, the fishermen, the clerks in the stores, the men on the banana and cocoa plantations who hold civility and decency together. They will be undaunted if they know that we care. It will not be our words but our actions that will tell them how we feel. I wish that there were more we could do, more we could offer, Mr. Speaker.

We have such a Government, such a process, that we lost 50 families; we found them again, I guess, and they are back at Ross Point and comfortable for the evening. There are some Canadians who say it is all over and that they want to stay and finish their vacation or get back to work. There are already non-Grenadians who say they will remain there.

Half an hour or so ago we learned that St. George's is secure and that people are beginning to move in the streets. I gather that there are still unsecured areas to the east of the city that are not safe. Already the island is beginning to settle down, not with flaming rhetoric or with blaming anyone—the Americans, the Bajuns, the Grenadians, Marxism, Communism or whatever. Let us not interfere with the process but rather by the extension of love, peace and prayers and perhaps some medical supplies, clothing and food, show that we want to restore to the island its way of life and peace.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dupras (Labelle): Mr. Speaker, I commend the New Democratic Party for the timeliness of their motion to debate the matter of the invasion of Grenada by American troops. Before referring to my notes—

[*English*]

The Hon. Member for Dartmouth-Halifax East (Mr. Forrester) expressed sympathy to the people of Grenada and the High Commissioner. I have already expressed these feelings to