

*Statements by Ministers*

a per capita basis, Canadians are the largest donors of food aid in the world.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Clark (Yellowhead):** As I see it, considering the present situation, Canada should encourage better co-ordination among donor countries.

Last Tuesday, I wrote to the Minister of External Affairs of each of the seven countries of the Western Economic Summit. I pointed out that many Ethiopians will die of hunger or disease unless their country receives massive support in the form of goods, humanitarian aid and logistical support.

I also told them of my impression that the Ethiopian government was doing everything it could to deal with the situation.

[*English*]

Each evening as our families witness the anguish and suffering brought so intimately into our homes by television, we are reminded of how very well off we are, of the quality of our lives compared to the desperate lot of so many people throughout the world. I am deeply touched by the enormous response from Canadians to the plight of the hungry in Ethiopia, in the Sahel, and throughout the areas of Africa stricken by the current drought.

While the extent of the generosity of Canadians has been overwhelming, I wish to assure our fellow Canadians that their intentions, proposals, contributions and offers of assistance are sincerely welcomed and are being given every attention. In the days and weeks to come, the Government will continue to work closely with those individuals and organizations at home to ensure that Canadian assistance is brought effectively to bear in face of this desperate situation.

Abroad we will continue to work with the Ethiopian Government, with other donor nations, and with the United Nations and its agencies to monitor the African situation and maximize relief efforts. In this endeavour the compassion and the expectations that have been made so manifest by the Canadian people will be our guiding light.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Hon. Jean Chrétien (Saint-Maurice):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to commend the Minister for his statement today. I believe it really reflects the thoughts of the Canadian people. They want the Canadian Government to move quickly and effectively in this area. Any move made by the Government in that direction is applauded by me, my Party, and, I am sure, by all Canadians.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Chrétien:** I would also like to congratulate the Minister for his objectivity. We are all proud that we have been the first for some time, in terms of per capita aid to Africa, and we must continue to be first. I am glad that the Minister recog-

nizes that we are by far the greatest per capita contributor to Ethiopia. I commend him to carry on in this endeavour.

This move to contribute more money to Africa is good. We agree with the \$50 million funding. However, we would like to know whether the Government is taking that money away from other people in the world who are suffering. We would like to know if this is new money and if that action will in fact reduce the cuts in foreign aid which were indicated a week ago by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson). We do not want that to look good while other people suffer. In addition, CHAD made an application this morning, because the same problem exists there and it is spreading to other countries in Africa.

● (1210)

I do not think that we should cut aid, and I commend the Minister for not doing that. I hope that what he said last week will be withdrawn, because, in spite of the fiscal problems facing Canada, all Canadians want the Government to do more in this area. Now is not the time to cut foreign aid.

Our Government had the very commendable goal of spending 0.7 per cent of GNP on foreign aid by 1990. It is not the time to reduce these goals because of economic problems in Canada when we see on television every night what is happening in those countries.

I am pleased that the Minister indicated that these funds will come from new money. We must be prepared to assist on a daily basis, because this is not only a problem at present, it is spreading throughout the world. It is a positive step in order to help these countries develop their infrastructure through such methods as water projects to help avoid future crises of this sort. No one wants to be partisan about this issue.

While I believe the Minister is taking the right steps, I hope he can assure us that it is not just a facade to hide cuts in other areas.

I am sure that the House of Commons would want to keep its commitment. The goal of 0.7 per cent of GNP is not enough. Our former distinguished Leader, the Right Hon. Lester B. Pearson, along with those who had missions around the world, asked that the rich countries of the world increase their foreign aid to 1 per cent of their GNP. I believe Canada can be a leader in this respect, and I personally was frustrated that we were not proceeding fast enough.

When I was Minister of Finance and President of the Treasury Board I always ensured that we did not cut funds destined for foreign aid in order to solve Canadian problems.

I know that the Minister wants to be successful and achieve that goal of 0.7 per cent. That is what he said to the United Nations on September 25 and that is what he asked Mr. Lewis to say two days before the cuts were announced. I am pleased that the Government is taking this action and that it is using new money. It should continue this policy, because Canadians want the Government to make a good contribution to aid around the world.

Although Canada has its problems, we are fat compared with those countries. The Government cannot ignore the prob-