

Supply—External Affairs

35. Economic, technical, educational and other assistance as detailed in the estimates, \$75,600,000.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Chairman, I should just like to comment briefly about item 35 which involves, among other things, contributions under the Colombo plan and contributions to other nations. The total amount of the item has been increased from approximately \$50 million to \$75 million this year.

I merely want to contrast this assistance for economic development and technical and educational assistance to other countries with the paltry amount that we consider worth while to contribute toward the same sort of advancement and assistance for our native Indian people. An announcement was made earlier this year to the effect that \$3½ million would be expended over the next three year period for community development and advancement on Indian reserves, or a little more than \$1 million per year. It has long been the position of the C.C.F. and the New Democratic party to favour external aid programs such as the Colombo plan, thinking that we are doing a wonderful thing in assisting other nations to advance economically; but I am beginning to have some objection to proceeding in this manner with regard to other countries when we treat our own native Indians in such niggardly fashion.

I merely want to express my opposition to the vote now before us, and to suggest that until such time as we can develop a Colombo plan for our Indians that means something we should not be sending these large amounts of money to other nations. Let us look to home first.

Mr. Nesbitt: Mr. Chairman, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre:

That vote No. 35 under the Department of External Affairs be reduced by the amount of \$350,000 being the value of wheat flour to be given to Indonesia under the Colombo plan.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Chairman, I should like to point out that no wheat flour has been sent to Indonesia yet. The matter is being reviewed, as I told the house some time ago.

Mr. Howard: Mr. Chairman, in view of the remarks I just made, which incidentally were made not knowing that the hon. member for Oxford was going to move an amendment of this sort, and having regard to the opposition I expressed to this sort of activity when we are treating our own people in such terrible fashion, I can do nothing else but vote for the amendment to reduce this vote.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Chairman, I simply want to say that I can quite understand the reason advanced by the hon. member for Skeena in indicating his intention to vote in favour of the amendment to reduce this item. For myself I feel that despite any feelings we may have about the government of Indonesia we should be very careful about cutting off aid which goes to the people of that country. Therefore I personally propose to vote against the amendment for that reason.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Lessard (Lake St. John): Mr. Chairman, my two colleagues here and myself intend to oppose the motion of the hon. member for Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt).

I am of the opinion that Canada must help those countries which are less fortunate than we are.

Personally, I should like to take this opportunity to point out to the Secretary of State for External Affairs that, in my opinion, one of the best ways to help underdeveloped countries through the Colombo plan is still to help the missionaries of various religious denominations, so as to enable them to assist those unfortunate people as much as possible.

Mr. Tremblay: Mr. Chairman—

[*Text*]

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Chairman, I was very interested in the observations made by the hon. member for Greenwood and by the hon. member who has just spoken. I am sure the hon. member for Oxford cannot really have reflected seriously on the implications of what he is suggesting.

I have been asked whether the government intends to terminate shipments of flour to Indonesia under our Colombo plan program. I have said we have not yet shipped flour this year, although we provided assistance to Indonesian students, some 40 of them, a number of whom are now in this country, I would like to place this question in the proper perspective.

Over more than a decade decisions by Canadian governments with respect to the magnitude and type of our assistance to the Colombo program, of which Indonesia is a member, have been largely free of strategic and political considerations. The view now being taken by some hon. members that our aid has a political motivation will, I think, be received with great concern in certain areas.

The fact that over the years our development of assistance has been largely free of fluctuations dictated by short term political consideration accounts to a very large extent