"We've poverty right here in Canada. "Charity begins at home". "We can't afford it". You hear these remarks when you talk about the Freedom from Hunger Campaign. Certainly we have shameful conditions at home that call for deep concern and quick attention. But a good look at the poverty and injustice that exists on a world scale might bring our own problems into clearer focus--could reveal some shocking similarities--and perhaps Charity Begins at Home would get new life.

Those who would restrain charity within national borders forget that we live in an interdependent world, where conditions in any part affect the rest. They don't realize that the greatest revolution in history is going on--a world revolution. The poor and deprived, one-half to two-thirds of our fellow human beings are in revolt against hunger and want--no longer an inexorable heritage to them. They've learned about a better life and they're determined to have it--not as a handout, as a human right.

To make a financial comparison, in 1960 there was $1,500 per capita in Canada--in poor undeveloped countries hundreds of millions eke out one to two hundred dollars per year.

Canada, of course, is quite able and must wipe out poverty at home. But it's ridiculous to say we can't afford to join also in the world fight against hunger and want. What we need is to realize the gross inhumanity of more than half the world insufficiently fed and that a blanket of poverty covering so much of the world, means a blanket coverage of grave danger for all mankind. Not only in Canada--the fortunately-born across the world have no choice but to rise above their isolation, complacency and ease and create a constructive force fast enough to save the world--and of course our own souls.
Here's a comment by Barbara Ward, a noted British authority, writing about us and our world, so sharply divided into those who have all the freedoms, and those who lack the very first freedom, freedom from hunger. She says: "This is the ultimate challenge we face—to extend our vision of the good society to the whole family of man. Our wealth and comfort hold us back. We find it easier as do the wastrels of any age to 'sit down to eat and rise up to play.' We can like the misers of every epoch, argue that even the smallest transfer of our super-abundant wealth will face us with bankruptcy and ruin. It is easy for us as it has been for the lazy and unaware of every generation to pretend that nothing has changed, that the world is not in flames, that the old ways are better and that if the poor lack bread they can eat cake. Societies, classes, families, all have tried these evasions in the past—Marie Antoinette playing shepherdess when the peasants not the sheep of France were eating grass—Rome bemused with bread and circuses while the barbarians gathered at the gate—the Cretan kings drinking deep behind the walls on Knossos with Mycenian fleets waiting to take the city in the night. All these are symbols of the fate that awaits the complacent and comfortable when they let their good fortune stifle their goodwill."

The Freedom from Hunger Campaign gives each of us a chance to act. If you want to help—the first step of course is to become informed and the Canadian Freedom from Hunger Committee in Ottawa, the churches, the "Y", or United Nations Ass'n. have information for you for the asking. You might gather a group to study and discuss the problems of world hunger or talk about it to your neighbours. You might persuade your organization to take part—in an individual project, or by supporting and publicizing the Canada Mysore project, providing scholarships or giving to a general fund of our Canadian Freedom from Hunger
Committee. Or you might get behind a Freedom for Hunger Week like Oakville's for your town. Or act on your own like a friend of mine who read an appeal for children's books from Father Roach of Cat Island near Jamaica. She consulted the local school authorities and to her amazement found herself with 2,000 books, all in good condition. Her church stored them. Her husband and two other couples did the packing—a transport company whenever they had room carried a batch of the books to Montreal and a shipping company dropped them off in Jamaica—free. "They only need to be asked," one of the men reported in surprise. Another shipping concern carried the books from Jamaica to Cat Island, also free. And now Father Roach, again with the help of shippers, has started a mobile library for the communities on Cat Island with 2,000 surplus books on the shelves discarded by schools in a small Ontario town.

We all know harassed hard-working volunteers in our communities who haven't time for anything more. At the Anglican Congress last summer members were asked to review their church activities in the light of their relevance to the propagation of the gospel. Perhaps the things that keep rushing us might bear re-assessment too, in the light of the urgent humanitarian appeal of world hunger. A hymn we often hear starts "Rise up, oh men of God, have done with lesser things".

There's a clinging tendency to leave things to government. But government is guided by public opinion and demand. Our leaders know quite well the need of developing countries for technical and financial aid, and most Canadians don't want a meagre effort—they'd like it to be commensurate with our resources. And developing countries need more. They need markets for their primary products and manufacturers in Canada and other developed countries. I'd suggest that strong nation-wide support of the Freedom from Hunger Committee
would indicate clearly to our government what the Canadian people want Canada's policy to be for the developing countries. But also—is there any comparison between paying taxes to support say the Colombo Plan, necessary though that is—and enlisting for active service person to person in this break-through against hunger, doing a special thing for a special group—feeling the warmth that comes from a deed of compassion?

Now the task is tremendous, almost beyond comprehension. But listen to what Assist. Sec. of State Harlan Cleveland said last June, on the 20th anniversary of F.A.O.: "Can we do it? Can we feed six billion people by the year 2,000? Can we double total farm production and triple the output of meat, eggs and fish? On the record—the record of miraculous technology, we surely can".

In closing this fifth talk, I'd like to use the words of an ancient writer: "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. The people that dwell in the valley of the shadow of death, on them hath the light shined". The writer was Isaiah. For centuries the people in the "have-not" places have dwelt in the valley of the shadow of death, but in this age of "overkill" we all dwell in that valley. Both they, and we in the "have" countries, have walked in darkness, they in the gloom of human degradation, we in the darkness of ignorance and indifference to their plight. But both groups in Isaiah's words have seen a great light. The light beams to the "have-nots" self-respect and decent living instead of hunger and its debasements. It beams to us "haves" our moral responsibility for these our fellow men.

The beams could merge, illuminating a road to the brotherhood of man and lighting up a highway to world peace.