

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

LEBANON—ISRAELI INVASION—GOVERNMENT ATTITUDE

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, I have some late information from the Secretary of State for External Affairs on the Lebanese situation. This information, in effect, constitutes replies to questions asked by Senator Macquarrie, Senator Marshall, Senator Stollery and Senator Donahoe on June 10.

Honourable senators, Senator Macquarrie asked if there had been any response to the message sent by the Prime Minister to Prime Minister Begin. We have received no response from the State of Israel other than through the actions it has taken in southern Lebanon.

Senator Marshall asked if a similar message had been sent to Syria or the PLO. The answer is that no message was sent to either party.

Senator Marshall also wishes to know Canada's position with regard to the PLO. The Canadian government recognizes that if there is to be a just peace in the Middle East, the legitimate rights and concerns of the Palestinians must be realized. We believe the Palestinians have a right to play a full part in negotiations to determine their future and the right to a homeland within a clearly defined territory, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The Canadian government does not, however, recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization, nor do we regard it as the Palestinians' "sole legitimate representatives." Of course, we acknowledge that it does represent an important element of Palestinian opinion.

We have had contacts with the PLO over time, particularly in Beirut, and have maintained these during the present crises when we called for all parties to end their military activity. Cabinet ministers have not undertaken contacts with the PLO. We have not authorized the opening of any PLO mission or office in Canada.

● (2110)

Senator Stollery asked whether any thought had been given to getting the Canadian embassy staff out of Beirut and away from the fighting. Honourable senators, there is presently a skeletal staff of five people at the embassy. Everyone else has been moved to safety. We are in contact with the ambassador on a daily basis and we are acting on his recommendations in this regard.

Senator Donahoe asked if any criticism had ever been directed by the Government of Canada toward the apparent occupation of Lebanon by Syria. Honourable senators, again the answer is no. The reason for this is that the Syrians were invited there by the Lebanese government which has never asked them to leave.

Finally, Senator Macquarrie wished to know if it was the view of the Canadian government that the PLO was responsible for the tragic shooting of the Israeli ambassador in London. Honourable senators, the Canadian government has no views on where the responsibility should lie. So far as the

government is concerned, this is not a Canadian matter but a matter for the police in Great Britain.

THE ECONOMY

GOVERNMENT POLICY

Hon. Raymond J. Perrault (Leader of the Government): Honourable senators, on June 8 Senator Roblin asked a question concerning the government's view of Canadian policy requirements now that the Versailles summit is over.

The Minister of Finance, when appearing before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs on May 31, 1982, stated that he would not seek additional borrowing authority until he laid out "in some detail an update of both the economic situation and the fiscal situation."

The government is presently assessing Canadian policy requirements and is trying to find ways, as the Prime Minister stated yesterday in the other place, "to weather the storm better than other countries", which are all presently experiencing considerable economic hardship.

Consequently, honourable senators, and in way of direct reply to Senator Roblin's question, the statement of the Minister of Finance will be brought to the Senate just as soon as it is available. The Prime Minister stated yesterday that the Minister of Finance will make that statement before Parliament adjourns for the summer.

REQUEST FOR ANSWERS

Hon. Jack Marshall: Honourable senators, I rise on a point of order concerning how long it takes to get answers which could be available in a much shorter time. I have mentioned this before and I realize I am being repetitive, but this is the last time I will raise the matter.

On May 18 I asked a question with regard to a rumoured reduction in the budget of the militia. The Leader of the Government in the Senate replied to my question on June 8, at which time I indicated that the answer had been available on the day after I asked the question. I pointed out that on May 19 the Minister of National Defence had put out a news release which comprised exactly one-half of the answer which the Leader of the Government gave us here and which was attached as an appendix to *Debates of the Senate* for June 8.

I just want to confirm now that I was correct in saying that the day after I asked the question a news release was published by the Minister of National Defence and that everybody received that, including the Leader of the Government here. I also sent him a copy of that release just a couple of days ago. It matches exactly the answer which appears as an appendix to the *Debates of June 8*.

My reason for raising the matter now is that I feel that when it comes to being provided with information, the Senate is not being treated with the proper respect. Surely, if the answers are at all available, the Senate should receive them