

*Interim Supply*

perhaps was a place in which Canada could play a part. When I was taken to the Gaza strip, as I say, I found our forces there stalemated, getting no further ahead. The Arab-Israeli dispute was still holding everything at a standstill. When I left the Middle East I was profoundly depressed, as I have said, because I realized that this is an area that calls out loudly for an integrated development. I may say that the Israelis need the Arabs just as much as the Arabs need the Israelis. I admit there are terrific problems to be solved, but I think one of the first problems to be solved is that of improving the living conditions in the Arab countries, which are in many instances very bad.

In Egypt they are making tremendous strides, but they are making tremendous strides against fearful odds; the growing population, the large scale illiteracy, and last but not least, the perfectly appalling climate, which makes many operations extremely difficult. It seems to me that our first step in seeking a peaceful solution of the situation in the Middle East is to remove some of the hardships under which the Arab people live at the present time; to give them every aid that we can in the development of their countries. I may say that when I was at Aswan I watched the construction work on the Aswan dam and saw the Russian equipment, and I knew of the Russian technicians who were working there. I felt it was a great tragedy that the late John Foster Dulles was not gathered to his fathers many years before, because he of course was responsible for this development in that area, having pulled the rug from under the Egyptian government with the projected loan that was to be given by the United States and Britain and the world bank. This forced the Egyptian government into the arms of Russia. However, that has been done. Now it seems to me we should try to retrace our steps to some extent and aid in the development of a country whose people have suffered for many, many years from colonial domination; people who were the subject of a savage attack only eight years ago, an unprovoked attack from Israel, Britain and France.

This brings me to the other aspect of the problem, that of releasing our men from service in the United Nations emergency force, and the disbandment of that force. While the major problem may very well be an economic one enveloping the whole area, I think we have to remember there are other aspects too, of bitter memory which are going to be very hard to overcome.

I hesitate to venture onto what I know is very delicate ground, as most of us are emotionally involved in the maintenance of the state of Israel due, I think, to our consciousness—a certain guilt consciousness perhaps—that it was people of our culture, of European culture, who committed such obscene atrocities against the Jewish people. I think that fact has coloured most of our thinking with regard to the state of Israel. I have reached the conclusion that it has led us to the point where we are not prepared to be objective in the assessment of the situation in the Middle East. For instance, I found very great difficulty in persuading people in Israel—though I did persuade some of them—to admit some of the very black spots in the history of the new state of Israel. To me it is extremely tragic that the people who have suffered the appalling treatment the Jewish people suffered at the hands of the nazis should themselves have been capable of the disgraceful conduct of which they were guilty at the time of the establishment of the state of Israel. Some of them finally admitted to me that there was savage destruction and slaughter in Arab villages which had the effect of terrifying the Arab population and driving them out, to become the now festering sore which is the refugee problem in the Middle East.

I have mentioned the attack on the Suez canal, which is of more recent history, though the memory is still very green. It seems to me that if Canada is going to accept the sort of responsibilities which we have been shouldering for the last eight years we must also demand the right to take steps to seek a permanent solution. Our government must be prepared to insist in the United Nations that the state of Israel, for which all of us have the very greatest sympathy and I take it the greatest admiration for what they have done, should accept the resolutions of the United Nations, if it is to be considered a good member of that organization. Among those resolutions—and there are many of them passed by the general assembly—perhaps the most important is the acceptance of responsibility for the plight of the Arab refugees in the neighbouring Arab states. I saw the plight of those refugees, and while I know it is said—there may be some truth in it too—that they are maintained in their present position by the Arab states as a weapon in this war of nerves with the state of Israel, I also think we have to face the fact that the Arab states are at present not in any economic situation to absorb this large body of refugees.

I do not think, and I have argued with my Arab friends on this score, that it is a reason-