

*Statements by Ministers*

Lebanon, along with Canada and France, is a member of *la francophonie* and at the forthcoming summit in Dakar, we will be exploring other practical ways to increase international support for Lebanon.

In view of the current situation, the Minister of Immigration has decided that removals of unsuccessful refugee claimants to Lebanon have been temporarily suspended pending clarification of the situation there.

Moreover, because of the deteriorating situation in Lebanon an Immigration officer has been sent to Cyprus to help ensure that our capability of processing Lebanese immigration applications is not interrupted by the current events.

Our embassy in Damascus remains in a close touch with events in Beirut as is possible. Indeed one locally-engaged member of the staff was in Beirut as recently as April 10.

[English]

With these and similar measures, we continue to do what we can to offer practical help to Lebanon and the Lebanese people. Ultimately, however, what is required is a political solution. For this, we must in the final analysis look to the Lebanese themselves and to others directly involved, especially Syrians, to demonstrate that their professions of support for the principles of national unity and independence are more than mere slogans. They must be matched by a genuine commitment to national reconciliation and by compromises which can lead to the election of a new president acceptable to all Lebanese communities.

As a first step, Canada repeats its call for agreement to and respect for an immediate cease-fire. The Government would welcome the views of other Hon. Members of the House and indeed of other Canadians on this tragic situation.

**Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park):** Mr. Speaker, I have risen in the House twice this week to address the situation in Lebanon. Many of my colleagues have also raised concerns about this same situation. There has to be an end to the pain and suffering that the people of Lebanon are living through day in and day out and Canada must fulfil its responsibility as a member of the international community by providing whatever assistance possible.

To my question about Canada taking the initiative and calling for an emergency debate in the Security Council, the Secretary of State insisted that a debate was not warranted at this time as, according to the Minister, it would not have any effect on this situation. Canada does have a part to play. One of the reasons I hope Canada lobbied so hard to get a seat on the Security Council was to play an active role in crises such as these. We now have this seat and we must not be meek in fully utilizing our position to maintain the level of influence in world affairs that Liberal Governments had developed in the past.

I have asked both the Secretary of State and the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) what the Government is doing to help those refugees who are no longer in Lebanon but who have fled to neighbouring countries. I have not received a satisfactory response from either of them. In fact, I did not get a response from the Prime Minister at all.

While we applaud the aid that Canada has offered Lebanon through the Red Cross, I suggest that Canada can do more. Earlier this week, I asked the Government to provide additional funds for those people fleeing the crisis in Lebanon who are now in neighbouring countries. This should be aid over and above the half million dollars that is to be put to use in Lebanon.

To the suggestion from my Liberal colleagues and I that Canada open an office in Cyprus so that the refugees from Lebanon would not have to go to Syria to obtain visas, there was no response. The suggestion was not even addressed. It is irresponsible to expect people fleeing a situation in which Syria is directly involved to be forced by the inadequate policies of this Government to have to go to Damascus in order to receive help in coming to Canada.

We as Parliamentarians have an obligation to take actions that will result in the restoration of peace in Lebanon. We cannot sit back and watch events unfold with eyes glazed over, unable to comprehend the reality of the vicious wars that have engulfed Lebanon for far too long.

The time for action is nigh. Why does Canada, under this rudderless Government, always wait to see what the rest of the world is doing and then say: "Me too"? Why can't the Government show some leadership? Why can't Canada take the lead and let other countries follow us?