

enthusiasm for the idea was somewhat tempered by the question of funds. It was not conceived to be essentially a government initiative, he said, but "It will exist and be successful if we can get governments at different levels, the provincial as well as the national government, if we can get business and labor and the academics interested in this idea, and if they are prepared to assist in the establishment of it" (*Globe and Mail*, December 3).

Central America

Immigration Minister Lloyd Axworthy was in Central America in December and January for a ten-day tour of that region. He visited El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and Mexico. At the end of the trip, he told reporters in Mexico City that the human tragedy he had seen during visits to refugee camps convinced him that Canada should adopt a more prominent diplomatic, political and economic role in Central America. He also accused the Honduran military of mistreating displaced Salvadoreans, and complained about a lack of cooperation from the US in dealing with the plight of Central American refugees. Mr. Axworthy said that he would report to his Cabinet colleagues on the broader political and economic issues. His visit was the first time a Canadian Cabinet minister had visited El Salvador or Honduras (*Globe and Mail*, January 8).

At the press conference, Mr. Axworthy endorsed the efforts of Mexico and Venezuela to find grounds for a negotiated peace settlement in El Salvador. He also endorsed the policy of the UN Commission for Refugees, which favors local settlement of refugees wherever possible. Canada may be able to develop aid projects in some Central American countries that would benefit both the refugees and the local population, he said. For this year, Canada's target for refugees from Central America is two thousand, double what it was in 1982. (See BILATERAL — EL SALVADOR and NICARAGUA.)

Arab-Israeli Conflict

Canada's position regarding the conflict in the Middle East was questioned in the House of Commons in December. On December 1, John Crosbie (PC, St. John's West) asked Prime Minister Trudeau whether recent statements made by a Liberal MP were, or would become, government policy. He quoted Ian Watson (Lib, Châteauguay) who had reportedly proposed that the government stop "pussyfooting" around the recognition of an independent Palestinian state, and had said that the Liberal caucus was "overwhelmingly sympathetic" to the Palestinian cause. Mr. Watson had also said that he favored high-level contacts with the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), according to Mr. Crosbie. Mr. Trudeau responded that "there is no attempt on the part of the government to prevent Members from developing their thoughts on any future events." Mr. Trudeau said that a statement by a caucus member does not become government policy.

Another issue regarding Canada's Middle East policy was brought up on December 7. David Orlikow (NDP, Winnipeg North) told the House of Commons that "it was recently revealed that the Canadian Dairy Commission willfully broke government rules forbidding government agencies to support the Arab boycott of Israeli goods and services. The Canadian Dairy Commission admits having entered into agreements that clearly accepted the principle

of the Arab blacklist against Israel, in order to get contracts from Libya." He presented a motion that the government take action to ensure that its [1976] anti-boycott policy be respected by all government agencies, departments and Crown corporations.

On December 8, Ian Watson (Lib, Châteauguay) asked further policy questions in the House of Commons. He said that in a recent meeting he had had with Yassar Arafat, the PLO leader had indicated that he would favor the idea of a UN-administered referendum of Palestinians living on the West Bank, in Gaza and East Jerusalem, to determine whom the Palestinians wanted to negotiate secure boundaries for them. Mr. Trudeau responded that, "on the principle of the choice by the inhabitants of the area of who should represent them, the government is in accord Whether having the United Nations supervising the electoral process is the correct method or not, I am not prepared to say at this time."

Another MP inquired about Canadian policy on December 14. Louis Duclos (Lib, Montmorency-Orléans) asked the Prime Minister why Canada had, a week earlier, with the US, Costa Rica and Israel, voted against a resolution in the UN in favor of the establishment of an Arab State in Palestine. The motion had passed with a sweeping majority, Mr. Duclos said. Mr. Trudeau said that he had not read the resolution in question, and therefore was unable to answer the question.

Trade Minister's Visit to the Middle East

International Trade Minister Gerald Regan visited Middle Eastern countries in January. "The main objectives of this mission include furthering Canadian trade relations, promoting Canadian products and expertise and developing technical cooperation with various government ministries," an External Affairs press release December 31 stated. The countries visited were Oman, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Cyprus.

DEFENCE

Cruise Missile Testing

Negotiations between Canada and the US regarding a proposed weapons testing agreement continued in December and January, as did protest by Canadians about an agreement which was to follow the umbrella agreement and regulate the testing of unarmed Cruise missiles by the US in northern Alberta. Canadians had been registering opposition to the Cruise missile testing plans since last spring, when it was revealed that such talks with the US were underway. There have been several delays in the signing of the umbrella agreement. Cabinet Ministers had said that the delays had nothing to do with public opinion, which had taken the form of mass demonstrations, referendums and petitions to Parliament since the spring.

In the House of Commons since the spring, MPs had demanded that the government reveal the details of the agreement, but the government had stood firmly behind a decision not to make the details public until after signing. The US government had sought permission from the Ca-