

*Government Orders*

help stricken communities through these extreme difficulties.

With respect to the impact on the domestic situation I would suggest that ever since we took office the government has shown it is committed to support the agricultural community in Western Canada. We have given evidence of that on several occasions in the course of our mandate, and again recently in giving support to agricultural producers in their quest for alternate survival means tailored to the needs of their community. I expect that my colleague does not entertain any doubt whatsoever about what our government has done.

As to a special measure, I think the Minister of Agriculture and some of his colleagues are examining the situation to see whether something else might be done. Unfortunately I am not in a position to provide more information on that point. The main issue I want to emphasize in the debate today is that it is imperative that we should try to solve some of the problems of the people who have been the victims of this crisis. That was the thrust of my remarks today, and I am convinced that all members of the House and all Canadians will be supportive of any measure we can take to assist those people.

[*English*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** I will recognize the hon. member for Burnaby—Kingsway and then the hon. member for Northumberland.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Svend J. Robinson (Burnaby—Kingsway):** Mr. Speaker, the minister just said that the government wants to provide assistance to the people affected by the crisis in that area. She knows full well that among those are some Palestinians living in the occupied territories of the West Bank and Gaza. She knows, for instance, that Palestinians working in Kuwait have sent a lot of money simply to support their families still living in the occupied territories. That money has now run dry, and for the Palestinians living in the occupied territories, the situation is very serious indeed. As the minister knows, those Palestinians face illegal deportation, collective punishment, and settlements. And now they are facing another major problem, the lack of financial support, usually given by the members of their families in Kuwait. The

minister mentioned how important it is to respond to the need of the people from Jordan and Turkey for example. What will the government do to help the Palestinians living in the occupied territories, who are also victimized by this whole situation?

**Hon. Monique Landry (Minister for External Relations):** As my hon. friend has just mentioned, Mr. Speaker, we recognize indeed the tremendous needs of the community directly affected by the Iraqi crisis. Immediately following the invasion, we may have been more directly concerned by the exodus of a great many displaced people toward the so-called frontline nations and by the very serious consequences both on the individuals and the governments who had to provide food and shelter for those displaced people.

The House should therefore understand that we are currently involved in discussions, that we have met some immediate needs identified by such international organizations as, for instance, the International Immigration Office. As I explained in my remarks, we are working with the international community through the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and the OECD, as well as with donor countries in an effort to identify the areas of intervention and make sure that the needs of the people will be taken into account and that we will be able to provide enough assistance to help these populations.

• (1630)

My hon. friend most certainly knows that the CIDA has assistance programs for the Palestinians and that, during these discussions, we will certainly check to see whether additional funds should be allocated for compensation. I do not think that any decision has been made so far, but I take due note of his comment. I am aware of the impact this loss of revenues provided by those working in Kuwait will have on Palestinians. I also take due note of this.

[*English*]

**Mrs. Christine Stewart (Northumberland):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member referred to the fact that many countries outside the Middle East region are very severely affected by the crisis that exists, among them east European countries and also many Third World countries very distant from the Middle East.