

ed by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson) in the answer he gave on Tuesday, November 29 to the question of the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie), the government has not modified its position regarding the Middle East.

On October 28, 1977, Canada supported a resolution condemning the Israeli policy of colonization of occupied territories. During the general debate of the General Assembly in the fall, the Secretary of State for External Affairs once again restated the concern of Canada over the colonization policy of Israel and its incidence on a resumption of constructive negotiations toward achieving peace. We continue to be opposed to the creation of colonies in the occupied territories for the main reason that in our opinion, it is detrimental to the conclusion of a negotiated solution suited to the framework of resolution 242 of the Security Council.

On November 25, 1977, Canada voted against the resolution regarding the situation in the Middle East because it contained elements which went beyond the negotiation pattern provided under resolutions 242 and 338 of the Security Council and which prejudged the outcome of discussion under way and negotiations which will eventually take place in Geneva. It is therefore illogical to condemn Israel because it is still occupying territories captured in 1967 because the occupation is simply a result of the absence of a peace agreement. Obviously, one cannot sincerely expect Israel to evacuate territories before negotiations are held. It also goes without saying that the subject of its withdrawal will be an important issue during these negotiations. Furthermore, this resolution called for the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Canada does not recognize the PLO even if it believes that Palestinians have the right to defend their point of view and participate in the negotiations dealing with their own future.

It therefore follows that our votes on these two resolutions are quite compatible and in agreement with the principles we had stated regarding the Middle East. In effect, the first one, under certain aspects, went further than the framework of resolution 242 and was not compatible with the negotiation process mentioned in that resolution. As to the second one, it dealt with an element of the Israeli policy in the occupied territories which, in our opinion, diminished the prospects of a quick resumption of the negotiations and the achievement of peace.

Just some time ago, Canada voted in favour of a resolution of the Security Council calling for Israel to withdraw from southern Lebanon in order to be replaced by a United Nations force set up for peacekeeping purposes in that very territory.

● (2232)

AGRICULTURE—PRICE OF POTATOES LESS THAN COST OF PRODUCTION—ACTION TO ALLEVIATE

**Mr. Eymard Corbin (Madawaska-Victoria):** Mr. Speaker, on Tuesday March 7, I asked the Minister of Agriculture (Mr.

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Whelan) to take some action to alleviate the unfavourable effect of low potato prices in eastern Canada this year. This is the fifth time since December of last year that I have raised this serious problem in the House of Commons. Many family farms risk going under if the producers cannot obtain new financing for their operations or if they cannot pay back to the finance companies the sums borrowed last spring for their sowing operations.

I will only mention in passing the payments due to federal and provincial farm credit corporations which are also asking for their money. This spring will therefore be even more difficult for those who want to stay on the farm, but who must now decide whether or not to plant this year, or else to rent or sell their land, which would be a very extreme and difficult solution. With thousands of barrels of potatoes still in storage, with bankers who want to be repaid and not knowing the precise intentions of the government, how can the farmers make decisions which are so important for their operation and their family? The potato producers do not doubt for one moment that the federal government wants to help them, especially the present Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) who has often shown not only a good understanding of the problems of potato production, but who has also reacted favourably and positively in the past to the needs of farmers.

As I stated during the proceedings on adjournment on February 20, the farmers are more than ever aware of the need to establish an organization truly capable of providing a certain stability for markets, and especially for prices. And whatever we might hear from the defenders of consumer interests who complain of all sorts of abuses, sometimes and even often justifiably, we cannot accuse the primary producers of unduly benefitting from our free enterprise system. The potato producer, and I should say rather some potato producers have admittedly obtained relatively high prices for their product in the past, but this has happened only rarely, and mostly because of exceptional circumstances and for limited if not insignificant quantities. On the contrary, in the last 10 years most producers have generally obtained rather low prices, barely sufficient to cover production costs.

I know very few people in this House, if any, who would invest every year \$25,000, \$30,000, \$35,000 or even more in high-quality planting potatoes, fertilizers, fungicides, insecticides, defoliants. I know very few who would invest \$60,000, \$80,000 or more, according to acreage, in tractors, cultivating machines, croppers, warehouses, without even knowing what nature and the markets hold in store for them. But there are hundreds of them, in my province of New Brunswick, who take that risk. They did so last spring. The result is they got much less on the domestic market for their products than it cost them to produce.

Of course the benefit went to the consumer, who last summer could buy high quality potatoes at a ridiculous price. It is therefore fair, in a federal system such as ours, that the