

Oral Questions

take this matter again to his cabinet colleagues and urge that it be reconsidered by the government?

Hon. Daniel J. MacDonald (Minister of Veterans Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I would like to leave one impression, and that is that down through the years—not just this year and last year—veterans have been treated quite well by the governments of Canada, and not just particularly by this government.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan): I would not like the impression to be left with this House or the country that we are not concerned.

I also would like to say that I am not the only minister who has been denied something he has been looking for. I want to make that clear because things can be very much misconstrued. However, as far as going back to the government with the proposals referred to is concerned, I cannot give the hon. member a date. I will go back to the government, but in all sincerity I would like to see that dust cleared first.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, when the minister goes back to the cabinet with the question of the rate of the basic disability pension would he also re-open the question of improving the position of veterans' widows?

Mr. MacDonald (Cardigan): Mr. Speaker, in the Department of Veterans Affairs we always have the concerns of veterans under consideration.

An hon. Member: Especially at election time.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**MIDDLE EAST—RANGE OF POSSIBILITIES FOR SETTLEMENT REFERRED TO BY MINISTER**

Mr. Bob Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, my question is to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the minister's statement in Jerusalem that the Middle East problem will have to involve some sort of territorial foundation and that there is a range of possibilities, what is the range of possibilities referred to by the minister?

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I do not think the rules would permit me to give the kind of detailed answer the hon. member wants. I think perhaps my best answer might be to invite the hon. member—and any others, by the way, who might be interested in this subject—either in a formal meeting of the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence or separately to discuss it with me because it is far too complex, and I think the hazards of perhaps an improper statement at this time preclude my answering in detail.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

MINISTER'S DEFINITION OF PALESTINIANS

Mr. Bob Wenman (Fraser Valley West): Mr. Speaker, in view of the minister's response I hope he will in fact refer the matter to the committee or make a statement on motions in this House as a result of his visit.

With reference to the minister's statement that the Palestinian Arabs cannot be left out of peace-making processes, who in the minister's opinion are the Palestinians? Are the Palestinians in fact those who live within the disputed territory, outside the disputed territory or both?

● (1502)

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, again I will do my best to be brief and precise. I had in mind most particularly those who are presently in the so-called disputed territory. One can also refer to some who are so-called refugees—that is one definition that is given to them—who may be living elsewhere at the moment. Of course, there are other definitions as well. In the terms that I made the statement, it was to the effect that there are people who have either been dislocated in terms of their traditional homes or who are at present insecure in terms of their present homes. This was a humanitarian and political problem which had to be resolved if there was to be progress on a Middle East settlement.

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PRIVILEGE**MR. WALTER BAKER—PARLIAMENTARY PRIVILEGE VIS-À-VIS SUPREME COURT OF ONTARIO RULING**

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege which affects all hon. members and to which Your Honour has already given some thought as a result of the notice I gave in this House the day before yesterday. It relates to the judgment given by Chief Justice Evans in the Supreme Court of Ontario respecting the "Regulations respecting the security of uranium information, S.O.R. 76-644." In my respectful submission, this judgment gave an interpretation of the extent of parliamentary privilege which I do not believe this House is obliged to accept, and I say with deference that I believe it should not be accepted. The relevant part of the judgment reads as follows, at page 42:

Following the authorities set out above, I have come to the conclusion that a member of parliament may utilize information proscribed by reg. 76-644 in parliament and may release that information to the media. However, I hold that the privilege of the member cannot be extended to protect the media if they choose to release the information to the public. Nor do I consider that the "real" and "essential" functions of a member include a duty or right to release information to constituents. The cases indicate that the privilege is finite and I would not be justified in extending the privilege to cover information released to constituents.

This judgment is no doubt consistent with the course of judicial interpretation, but I am not so sure it is consistent with procedural authorities and rulings by Mr. Speaker in this House. I believe, first of all, that it makes little sense and bad precedent to assert the clear line between the House and the