

*Supply—National Defence*

have as much information as we can secure concerning the legal basis on which this action rests, the chain of command, how far this operation has been forecast, and how the government considers that it is likely to operate.

**Mr. Pearson:** I suppose, Mr. Chairman, I am the last man in the committee who would desire to postpone action on this matter. Nevertheless, a good many questions have been asked of me, not only since we have been in committee but also some very important questions by my hon. friend who has just taken his seat. During the earlier discussion of this subject I was asked to enlighten the house in respect to several matters. One matter was the reason we had not previously taken action in regard to a United Nations police force in this particular area. Another was—and this has been brought up again by the hon. member for Greenwood—the relationship of our action to commonwealth unity. There were other important questions that were put to me at that time, and some have been put to me this afternoon, so I think I should crave the indulgence of the committee for a few minutes while I try to deal with these questions.

It was suggested this morning that we have not given parliament enough information in regard to recent United Nations actions or our policy in regard to United Nations actions in the past. So far as the first aspect of this question is concerned we have tried, I think, at this emergency session to deal with all the questions involved. There are matters upon which we have not been able to exchange information on a confidential basis with some of our friends opposite. I agree that in a time of emergency and crisis there should be the greatest possible exchange of information between the government and opposition leaders. It is a precedent that has been followed at times in the past, and it is a good one. If it has not been done on this occasion, the committee will understand that developments have moved very fast and we have been in the house almost constantly since the house was called.

I would point out, however, that there are observers in the Canadian delegation to the United Nations from all parts of this house. They sit in on our delegation meetings, and we hope they feel they are full members of the delegation in regard to the exchange of information. We do not, in our delegation meetings, hold anything back, I assure you, because of the fact that there are members of parliament from all parties. We are glad to have them there. I think the delegates have learned from these meetings practically

everything we were able to learn about developments at the assembly. Then, also, in regard to general information on these matters the committee on external affairs met for many days during last spring and early summer, when we had an opportunity of going over the whole question of the development of policy in regard to the Middle East.

The hon. member for Prince Albert asked particularly for enlightenment, as he put it, in regard to our previous attitude toward a United Nations emergency force for this particular area. I think he is satisfied with what I said earlier about our general attitude toward putting forces under the United Nations for general purposes and the difficulty of doing that under the security council organization as it is at present. I am sorry he is not able to be here this afternoon to decide whether or not what I am going to say about this matter is enlightenment. I would point out, and I have made a pretty careful survey of our record in this regard, that it was as early as 1953 that we discussed, with representatives of the United Kingdom government in the course of our diplomatic exchange of views, the possibility of replacing the truce supervisory organization in the Palestine area with a police force which would have greater powers, and greater authority, and be able to do things which the truce organization could not possibly do, thereby making the situation easier and making war more difficult.

At that time, in 1953, the matter also came up, though not in public discussion at the general assembly of the United Nations. We had previous discussions with the British and took the matter up with the secretary general, who had himself been considering it. We were told at that time that in his opinion it would not be a desirable move to make publicly at the United Nations general assembly.

That was in 1953. Then later, in 1955, when I happened to be in Cairo, I discussed this question with General Burns who came over from Jerusalem to see me, and we went over the question of the advisability of making a proposal at the next assembly—that would have been the assembly we are at now—for a United Nations force to patrol the boundary not only between Egypt and Israel, but between Jordan and Syria and Lebanon and Israel. On my return to Ottawa we brought this question up again when Sir Anthony Eden and Mr. Selwyn Lloyd visited us here, I think in January, 1956. We also took the question up in Paris with the French government. At that time the governments which I have mentioned, the British government and the French government, did not feel that this was a practicable proposition.