

Arab-Israeli Conflict

who are interested in more documentation to read that. It was a good statement. I would like to read it all, but time does not permit. It is on page 9 of the statement and will be included in the proceedings of that particular Committee. It indicates that the present Canadian Government supports the existence, security and well-being of Israel, and that the Arabs should make clear their willingness to live in peace with Israel. That offer has been made and was rejected. One cannot make an open offer unless one gets something in return. The offer was made; it was rejected because there is enough evidence to suggest that the plans to deal with the PLO were already in hand and there was a determination to do so. That I cannot document, but the evidence here in the report of the Secretary General should be read, because it gives that history.

The Minister went on to say:

We are deeply concerned over Israeli settlement policy. We regard the establishment of settlements, and other actions Israel has taken to extend its control over the occupied territories, as contrary to international law and extremely unhelpful to the peace process. We would like to see an end to this activity.

We recognize that for there to be a just peace, the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people must be realized, including their right to play a full part in negotiations to determine their future and their right to a homeland within a clearly-defined territory, the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

That is the first time that I have seen as clear a proclamation of Canada's intention. But it should be backed up with more than words; there should be activity. I do not agree with every single word of this motion that stands in the name of the Hon. Member for Châteauguay, and neither does he at the moment because it was put forward in November, 1981. At lot has transpired since then. But I think that he is to be congratulated for having given us the groundwork on which we could have an open discussion on this important matter, a matter on which the peace of the world could all too easily depend.

It is a delicate matter there because there is an invading force refusing to leave Lebanon. I knew Lebanon in happier days. I lived there for three years. The people in Lebanon are most open and welcoming. They did not realize that they would have to be welcoming an invasion force, though. I have had word from those who lived there at that time. How they have lived through the holocaust that has descended upon them over these last few months I do not know, but they are still there. I am glad they are there, and they would welcome me, I am sure, as they welcomed me before. I would like to go back to see them but I would find it very difficult. I just could not go back and see the Lebanon that I knew torn into shreds, divided as it is and occupied by a foreign invader.

An Hon. Member: Including Syria.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): Including Syria, I agree. There has to be a withdrawal of all non-Lebanese forces from Lebanon.

Mr. Prud'homme: Everybody should get out.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): That is right, of course they should. Lebanon is a peaceful country, a country of

traders, a country from which we derive much of our inheritance. Let us not forget that Byblos which is not far from Beirut—

Mr. Prud'homme: Beautiful.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): —is the origin of our word "Bible"; the Roman culture that is there in the Bekaa; the Crusaders who were there. Our history was written in those mountains and in those plains, as it was to the south in Samaria and Judea. That is part of our history too, let us not forget that. But I do not think that we can tolerate the situation any longer. We must take some action to ensure that Lebanon survives as Lebanon, free of the encroachments that have occurred from all sides, able to proceed with its mission of being. Let us remember this, too. It was a haven. It was a Switzerland, in more ways than one, in the Middle East. The Armenians who fled from Turkey, many hundreds and thousands of them settled in Lebanon. They were welcomed there, and here is something that a lot of people do not remember or do not know. There was a very active synagogue right in the centre of Beirut—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member but his time has expired.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): I was very pleased, Mr. Speaker, to be able to get that last portion in.

Mr. Prud'homme: And I was very pleased to listen to you.

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, in speaking to this motion on behalf of my Party this afternoon I want to begin by reaffirming, as I understand my Leader did earlier today, the commitment of the New Democratic Party to the continued existence and prosperity of the State of Israel within secure borders.

As democratic socialists, our commitment to Israel of course goes beyond our belief in the right of every nation to maintain its already established existence to the natural affinity we feel for the internal democracy characteristic of Israel and for the many social democratic institutions which have been developed there over the years, some of which, like the Histadrut, predate the State of Israel itself. Israel's kibbutzim of course have also served as an example to many over the years as to what is possible when human beings determine to live and to work together for the common good. Unfortunately, during recent years it is clear that the present Israeli Government both on the West Bank and in Lebanon have betrayed Israel's democratic traditions, and this is a source of much regret to us.

• (1750)

It is important, therefore, to do more than just reaffirm our traditional support for Israel, and so I would like to inform the House, and through the House all interested Canadians, of some of the internal deliberations which are currently taking place within the NDP, the results of which will be debated at our upcoming federal convention this July in Regina.