

Adjournment Debate

why it wants us to take this out—it has in rural areas served some purpose—I damn well think hon. members representing rural areas in other parts of Canada should get up and say why they think we should take it out, and what the reason is for the abuse.

May I call it ten o'clock, Mr. Speaker?

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—ISRAELI ATTACK ON REFUGEE CAMPS IN LEBANON—POSSIBILITY OF PROTEST BY CANADA

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, on December 5 I asked the Acting Prime Minister if he had conveyed to the Israeli ambassador the Canadian government's concern about the attacks by the Israeli air force upon Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon. I note that later on in the question period the hon. member for Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) put forward a question on the same subject.

We all know that deep emotions are involved in the continuing Middle East crisis, and suffering and violence are widespread. No thoughtful or reasonably informed person would assert that acts of violence are the exclusive approach of one side to the confrontation in the Middle East area.

It is sadly true that for the last half century, and indeed, longer, death and destruction have stalked the ancient land. The years prior to the U.N. establishment of the State of Israel were especially marked by terrorist violence. The blowing up of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem where British military and mandate officers were quartered, the assassination of Lord Moyne, and later of Count Bernadotte, were grim highlights of the activities of those who were determined that, despite the views of the indigenous people, a State of Israel would be set up. There were massacres of villages and other violence of horrendous proportions. Of course those who did not wish the creation of the state of Israel did not confine their response to passive resistance; far from it.

● (2200)

While one cannot establish a graduated scale of violence nor measure the iniquity of a violent act by the numbers killed or wounded, there are some incidents which by their very nature cry out for an expression of moral outrage. The Munich attack by the Black September group, the shoot out of innocent airline passengers at international airports, the shooting down of the Libyan civilian plane come to mind as particularly reprehensible.

The incident to which I referred the other day is thoroughly deplorable. In the past quarter century no group of people have suffered more painfully nor longer than the

[M. Peters.]

Palestinian refugees. These unfortunate people were driven from their homes, and after terrible privations they ended up in camps scattered over the Middle East where they have lived year after year in tents or tin huts, without hope, without normal home life, and in prolonged misery.

One might think that people living in this kind of squalor and depression had suffered enough. How then can we visualize the feelings and fears of the women and children when the Israeli air force launched an attack upon them the other day? As a consequence of this military attack by modern aircraft many innocent women and children were slaughtered.

Not surprisingly, there were expressions of anxiety and concern from many parts of the world. Pope Paul roundly condemned the unmerited and exceptionally ruthless attack, and for this humble, stubborn Presbyterian the pre-eminent Catholic spoke nobly on the issue.

Tel Aviv's own afternoon newspaper asked why the air strikes were ordered immediately after a United Nations Security Council decision to which Israel objected.

The *Ottawa Citizen* in an editorial said:

... the Israeli air attack on Palestinian refugee camps and guerrilla bases in Lebanon this week was a shocking example of savage terror.

Many victims of the attack were women and children whose only crime seems to have been that they were Palestinian. For this accident of history, they could not return to their homeland, despite repeated United Nations resolutions and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and were doomed to a life of exile in a foreign land. Even so, they were not safe from death.

Honest people everywhere can only condemn the Israeli attack as wanton massacre of innocent civilians.

A *Globe and Mail* editorial had this to say:

... the traditions and principles around which the State of Israel is built are not such as to prepare us for the callous decision to go ahead, in the certain knowledge that innocents would be among the victims, with this week's strikes against camps in Lebanon. There is nothing Israel could have done that would have blemished more darkly its own cause.

I trust, Mr. Speaker, that our government, known for its devotion to compassion, fairness, peace and good will, made its view clearly known to the Israelis on this matter.

Mr. J.-J. Blais (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. gentleman for his very thoughtful statement. It is evident from the time he took in preparing for this late show that he feels very deeply. I recall when the question was asked in the House by the hon. gentleman, and I recall as well the statement made by the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs at that time.

I am informed that the text of the statement made by the hon. minister has been drawn to the attention of the Israeli ambassador in Ottawa by the Department of External Affairs.

I have not spent as much time as perhaps I ought as a parliamentarian in studying the problems of the Middle East. It is a situation that all Canadians are intimately aware of, whether they concentrate on the difficulties or not, because some of our citizens are representative of that area. We have groups on both sides of the conflict, and the human problem faced in that area is one common to us all and has transcended historical ties.