

*Supply—National Defence*

and consideration are now before each member for his consideration. In coming to these decisions which we have taken we have at all times been very conscious, as have our military advisers, of the dangers inherent in sending a relatively small and lightly armed force into an area where so recently there has been much fighting and destruction.

So, from the very first we in the government have been fully conscious as to the sombre and challenging task facing the United Nations and ourselves: the urgent need is to try to secure the peace by establishing quickly—while there is still time—and with the necessary co-operation of the Middle East combatants, the first international police force of its kind ever to be organized in this war-torn world. To pioneer for peace, to try to find new ways to stop war, to be resolute—not to kill but to stop the killing—surely there is no more honourable task for Canadian service men to take on. The proposition to which this government is dedicated, and which I believe all Canadians will endorse, is that it is better to run risks for peace than to be faced with war's certain casualties and chaos.

It has been very evident, I think, to all of us that a general war under conditions obtaining today is in all conscience unthinkable. Surely, then, it is the job of the defence department to assist, by every means in its power, those who would discourage war and assert the claims of peace. That is what we are endeavouring to do under the aegis of the United Nations at this very moment.

May I now briefly review, in three stages, the chronology of military events affecting Canada as they have occurred since the Prime Minister announced on November 4 that the Canadian government was ready to recommend Canadian participation in the United Nations police force proposed the previous day by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, if it was thought that Canada could play a useful role.

Studies were at once instituted by our departmental officials and our service chiefs in anticipation of a call for a Canadian contribution to this force. From these studies and from the second and final report of the Secretary General of the United Nations, made on November 6 and recommending self-contained units of battalion strength for the United Nations emergency force, we concluded at a meeting of senior service officers and government officials who met with me on November 6 that Canada's contribution might be an infantry battalion group.

As a result of the studies and consultations leading to that recommendation, the Prime

Minister, on November 7—the very day on which the United Nations resolution establishing the United Nations emergency force was passed and self-contained battalions were formally called for by the United Nations council—announced the government's offer of a contribution to that force of a battalion group of 1,000 men or more, to be supported by its own mobile base of Her Majesty's Canadian ship *Magnificent*. This offer, the Prime Minister noted, was subject to any re-arrangement made necessary after consultation with the commander of the force, Major-General Burns.

This Canadian contingent, of battalion strength, was to be augmented by technical and administrative units to make it self-supporting. The Prime Minister said that Canada was prepared to airlift the group to the Middle East, and send the *Magnificent* to transport vehicles and stores, and to act as a temporary mobile Canadian base for rations, medical supplies, ammunition, fuel and limited accommodation stores, until more permanent base arrangements could be made ashore. It was indicated that the *Magnificent* would also provide a small base hospital, serve as a force headquarters and provide communications between the force and Canada.

The provision of this mobile base was an important consideration because one does not send troops off to foreign lands—at least I would not want that responsibility—until one knows how they are going to be supplied and cared for, and none of these things had then been decided.

The next day I announced the immediate organization of a battalion group, to be composed of the first battalion Queen's Own Rifles of Canada, located at Calgary, with signals, engineers, army service corps, ordnance and other supporting units, the numbers of which I gave the day before yesterday in answer to a question of the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich. In the announcement which I made, I said:

It is emphasized that the preparation and movement of this force is being taken now without first having had the benefit of consultation with Major-General Burns, the United Nations commander, and it is possible that the type and organization of the Canadian contribution may have to be changed at a later date. However, it is considered essential to take all possible steps to have the Canadian contribution ready and available for movement overseas within the shortest possible time.

The following day, November 9, General Burns confirmed officially that the initial form of the force should be independent military groups made self-supporting by having their own signals, transport, engineer, medical and other services. Here I might interject, perhaps, that as a result of Canada's policy