

begin discussion to ensure that the Hon. Member's idea will become reality and Canadians can be proud that we enjoy peace and are attempting to ensure it spreads throughout all countries.

Mr. Geoff Scott (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State of Canada): Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak to the proposed Bill respecting International Peace and Goodwill Day which, in effect, would substitute that day for our current Boxing Day holiday.

At the outset, I want to congratulate the Hon. Member for Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington (Mr. Vankoughnet) for bringing this important matter to our attention. Let me also throw a bouquet to the Hon. Member for York West (Mr. Marchi) for his very thoughtful remarks which I share, as an individual Member of Parliament.

This is a very important matter that we Canadians keep before us, those ideals and aims dear to our heart and that may, as in this case, have great portent for our freedom and our very existence. Next to the food and shelter that help keep us alive, I suggest that the peaceful enjoyment of life is of supreme importance. Whatever we may think of the effectiveness of naming a holiday to promote an ideal, I am sure that no one in the Chamber doubts the importance of peace in the world. International peace has long been a major interest of Canada and we are by no means alone in our concern for peace. Indeed, the United Nations has chosen this year, 1986, as International Peace Year.

The extreme seriousness of widespread belligerence is pointed out in a recent United Nations study which found that more than 20 million people have been killed in approximately 150 armed conflicts since 1945, when the 51 founding member states signed the United Nations Charter. For every 100,000 people on earth there are 600 soldiers but only 85 doctors. The average world military expenditure for each soldier is over 50 times that of average public spending on education for every school-aged child. Global military spending has reached approximately \$1 trillion a year, with developing countries spending 20 times more for military purposes than for economic development. In view of these alarming facts, it is clear that the U.N. Charter's main objective: "To save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, which twice in our lifetime has brought untold sorrow to mankind", remains a goal and not an achievement. While a global war may have been averted since the founding of the U.N., peace remains elusive in some regions of the world.

● (1620)

There are two opposing philosophies on the means of maintaining international peace. One of these calls on the major powers to build up such a terrifying potential for massive mutual destruction that no sane person would risk ending the world as we know it. The other is to outlaw the weapons of war altogether. Certainly in a world still experiencing quite shocking starvation in some regions; a world in which the more fortunate nations are responding with great generosity to human need, the enormous expenditure of energy and human

International Peace and Goodwill Day Act

ingenuity in developing the means to destroy life is incongruous, to say the least.

The Government of Canada recognizes the need to have a defence capacity, but has a firm commitment to promote peace and encourage the superpowers to draw back from the current dangerous level of nuclear weaponry. Our Ambassador for Disarmament, Douglas Roche, tells us that many individuals and groups throughout Canada are working to inform the wider public of the critical issues of peace and security facing the world today. He says there are tens of thousands of teachers, religious leaders, lawyers, scientists, students and parents committed to devoting their energies to a wide range of activities, both political and educational in nature.

The long term educational activities of this widening body of Canadians are having a profound effect. The numerous public seminars, conferences and debates held throughout the country, as well as the hundreds of publications produced, are of fundamental importance in making the terrible complexities of the arms race comprehensible to the public.

Non-governmental organizations are uniquely and strategically placed to help develop an informed public opinion. It is this public opinion that will contribute to the political process and thereby the construction, development and support of policies which will advance the cause of peace, with freedom and justice. The Canadian Government maintains a disarmament fund to help promote public discussion and education on this vital subject.

During the 1984-85 fiscal year, allotments to this project totalled \$575,000 while research and publication contracts totalled another \$178,000. There were 53 recipients, including the McGill Centre of Research on Air and Space Law and a coalition of 26 women's groups which organized a conference entitled "Women's Alternatives for Negotiating Peace", at Mount St. Vincent University in Halifax in June 1985.

Other recipients included the Canadian Institute for International Affairs, Science for Peace, the Canadian Coalition Conference Planning Committee and the Canadian Disarmament Information Service. Disarmament Fund contributions, mainly for the organization of conferences, were also provided to a number of post-secondary institutions including the University of Moncton, Laval University, Carleton University, Simon Fraser University, the University of Manitoba, St. Mary's University, Trent University, York University and the University of Toronto.

May I say that the Bill put forward by the Hon. Member is a really important first step. It is particularly appropriate in this International Year of Peace as decreed by the United Nations. I would agree with the Hon. Member who moved this motion, and I think I would gain the sympathies of all Hon. Members in this House to move the following: I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-258, an Act respecting International Peace and Goodwill Day, be not now read a second time but that the Order be discharged, the Bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.