

*Government Orders*

that is the whole issue of asbestos. Canada has ignored international labour organizations restrictions on the sale and use of asbestos. We are selling tonnes of it to Thailand. I think this kind of contradiction of international convention is most despicable. When we sign a convention we have to live up to its terms; that is why we sign it. The tripartite agency of the United Nations had been concerned with the hazards of asbestos in the early 1970s.

Canada regarded a number of the proposed provisions of the code of practice of the United Nations dealing with this issue as serious threats to the asbestos industry.

Canada undertook a world-wide embassy by embassy diplomatic offensive in Third World and East Bloc countries. Most of these governments guaranteed that all the delegates sent to Geneva would be pro-asbestos. This is not an inconsistency; it is an outright contradiction to what Canada said they were for. Despite this concerted action to defeat the International Labour Organization's recommendation, the UN convention did pass narrowly.

In another little side bar to all of this, Canada which normally rails against South Africa's blue asbestos came to its aid saying it should not be there because it was irreplaceable. This convention on asbestos was to try to obtain substitutes. It did narrowly pass. As soon as it did, Canada being a signatory opened a disinformation campaign to try to lessen its effects. This is shameful behaviour of a supposedly responsible, well developed western nation. Canada blatantly ignored clear International Labour Organization directives and put together a sophisticated marketing package. It now fully intends to offset its dwindling sales of asbestos in western Europe and North America by turning to the underdeveloped countries of the Third World for markets.

This is the kind of outright contradiction to international conventions that is totally unacceptable. If we are signing these things we have to be able to respect them. We have to stand as an example that it is not just a piece of paper, that it has to be respected.

I point out that we are in favour of signing these conventions. The conventions on conduct are important examples and symbolic gestures during the time of war. Because it now extends it to prisoners of war in civil

wars, there is a recognition that the kinds of wars which are sometimes the most brutal are those that are not international in nature but are civil. There are national liberation fronts which are also worthy of our concern to ensure that the rules of war are respected.

I am told that the Americans are having second thoughts about ratifying the protocols which we are speaking about this afternoon for that reason. They have some concern about respecting prisoners of wars of national liberation movements and giving them a recognized status. Canada's ratification of this bill this afternoon will be an important symbolic gesture that Canada sees the importance of addressing the concerns of prisoners of war of national liberation fronts.

My second theme is about the whole situation of preventing wars. We have the rules for conduct of war, but we have to give resources now to preventing wars to make them an obsolete form of conflict resolution. There is a number of ways that we can do that. First, we have to improve the resources to the United Nations. The United Nations is an international body that has always been zapped of resources and has been trying to play the peacekeeping role, the conflict resolution role and all such things with very limited resources.

We have seen the kinds of examples when it does work such as in Namibia, which gives us great hope that this is the kind of expanded role the United Nations can play.

We also know that Canada has allocated its armed forces to take place in the peacekeeping observation role in Central America. This is something that should be applauded. These are where our resources are. It is a good investment. It is an investment in peace. Not just an expansion of the United Nations role is necessary, we have to ensure a more equitable distribution of the world's resources.

As a member of the subcommittee on international debt, I am acutely aware of the kind of conflicts that result because of poverty. That is something we as Canadian citizens have to be concerned about. It does affect us. Those conflicts in El Salvador, those conflicts that I have witnessed in Africa and Eritrea, affect us because those people are at war. It is not just the horrible human costs, but it is threatening to us; international security is threatened when there are conflicts.