

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday, November 29, 1966

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

MIDDLE EAST—REPORTED U.A.R.— ISRAELI CONFLICT

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I do not know whether or not the Prime Minister is in a position to report to the house, but I would hope he would be able to say something regarding the ominous situation in the Middle East and the report today that various areas in the Middle East are on the brink of an explosion the like of which has not been seen since 1956.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I can only express the hope that the report to which my right hon. friend has referred, that we are on the brink of an explosion in that area involving greater danger than that of 1956, will turn out to be greatly exaggerated. It is true that a dangerous situation has developed as a result of Israel's reaction against what it considered to be serious border provocation. This is the matter which was dealt with by the United Nations Security Council when a resolution was passed criticizing Israel's reaction.

It is also true that there was a report about an air engagement that took place this morning. According to the information so far available, and naturally we are making further inquiries, a small number of Israel and United Arab Republic aircraft were engaged in an action near the midpoint between the Israel and Arab borders. Early reports indicate that two U.A.R. aircraft were shot down in this encounter.

As hon. members are aware, the United Nations has a peace-keeping force stationed in this area. I think we can take some satisfaction from the knowledge that this force is there. We expect to have more precise information shortly and when that information arrives I will report to the house at once.

MIDDLE EAST—SHIPMENT OF STARFIGHTERS BY U.S. TO JORDAN

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Will the Prime Minister say whether or not Canada was made aware in advance of the shipment of 36 F-104 Starfighters by the United States to Jordan? Was there any consultation between the United States and Canada before that action was taken and, if so, what attitude did Canada take?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): I have seen that report and inquiries are being made to ascertain whether there is any foundation to it, and whether this transfer has in fact taken place. I will be glad to report in that regard as soon as I receive further information.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Will the Prime Minister allow one more question? Does his answer mean that an inquiry is being made as to whether the United States is shipping or has shipped these aircraft, and that there was no consultation between Canada and the United States before this action was taken, if in fact it was taken?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, my answer indicates that I have not received authoritative information as to whether or not the transfer in fact has taken place. That is what we are inquiring into.

LABOUR RELATIONS

ALLEGED LOCKOUT OF LONGSHOREMEN ON PACIFIC COAST

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour regarding reports that the B.C. Maritime Employers Association has decided not to call out working crews, thus constituting a giant lockout in consequence of which, it is reported, some 50 or 60 ships are tied up in the Vancouver harbour. Has this situation been drawn to the minister's attention and what, if anything, is he or his department doing about it?