

*Adjournment Debate*EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—INQUIRY WHETHER GOVERNMENT
CONVEYED TO EGYPT ITS APPROVAL OF OPENING OF SUEZ
CANAL—CANADIAN REPRESENTATION AT CEREMONIES

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Madam Speaker, before I begin what I am sure will be a great contribution to this hour, I want it to be known that I made an even greater contribution a while ago in another stage of the proceedings when I refrained from speaking on Bill S-25, and for that self-denial I expect the eternal gratitude of the multitude of hon. members who are still with us. I might have had difficulty criticizing Bill S-25—

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. May we have just a little less noise in this House so that the hon. member for Hillsborough can speak on his question.

Mr. Macquarrie: Especially in International Women's Year, I thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me some protection in this unusually raucous House.

● (2200)

On April 10 I asked the minister a question concerning the re-opening of the Suez canal and whether the Canadian government would be represented at this auspicious occasion. I even went so far as to offer to accompany the minister considering the role my political ancestor, Benjamin Disraeli, played in the development and acquisition of that great waterway in the nineteenth century.

I realize, of course, that the minister was not at the opening ceremony. His schedule since attaining his new portfolio has been a busy one and I commend him for his zeal in taking on the burdens of office. But I would like to know that Canada was represented and by whom. Surely the function was one which merited a Canadian presence.

The construction of the Suez canal was a triumph of engineering skill and human perseverance. Ferdinand de Lesseps said in 1869 on its completion that the "waterway traced for civilization a pacific and productive route across the sands of the desert".

The re-opening exactly eight years after its closing as a result of the 1967 war was also a modern triumph. It was accomplished with the aid of trained personnel and up to date equipment from a number of countries including the United States, France, Britain, and the Soviet Union. But while the international effort to clear out the debris and make the seaway useable again was a major achievement, the major credit must go to Egypt and President Sadat for the act of faith which the re-opening demonstrates.

In this country, as in the United States, it is very difficult to get anything like fair coverage of the Arab side in the continuing confrontation in the Middle East. Here is a bright piece of good news. The Egyptian government is prepared to have the canal open and to make vast expenditures to restore the cities on its banks. This reveals a commitment to peace by President Sadat, who has shown himself a statesman of wisdom and moderation. Such a step, such a posture should be commended. It should be welcomed and not ignored.

It is in the interest of Canada and the world that further warfare be avoided in the Middle East, or to be more positive, that everything be done to maintain and strengthen peace. We make no helpful contribution by

[Mr. Lambert (Edmonton West).]

being drawn into the position of being the advocates of one side only. There has been nothing in history to suggest that between Canada and the Arab peoples there should exist anything but friendship and goodwill.

We should rejoice that Egypt has affirmed its faith and has re-opened to commerce the 101 mile canal through its ancient land. It is to be hoped that the commercial benefits to Egypt and other nations of the world will be substantial. More significant, however, is that it represents one contribution to the building of a viable peace in a part of the world that has known innumerable wars in ancient and, alas, also in our own times. To people of good will this is a worthy example and a splendid and positive gesture. I trust we have so conveyed our views to the Arab Republic of Egypt.

Mr. Herb Breau (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State for External Affairs): Madam Speaker, while the government did not convey a formal message to the government of Egypt following President Sadat's announcement of his decision to re-open the Suez canal, it has informally expressed the Egyptian ambassador its appreciation for the Egyptian good will in re-opening the canal. Furthermore, the government sent the hon. member for Saint-Denis (Mr. Prud'homme) as its special representative to the re-opening ceremonies held in Egypt of June 5. I know that the hon. member conveyed to officials of the Egyptian government Canada's hearty approval of this contribution to the normalization of life in the Middle East. The positive gesture by the Egyptians can only hearten those of us in other parts of the world who earnestly desire to see peace in the Middle East region.

IMMIGRATION—SUGGESTED REVIEW OF METHOD OF
OBTAINING BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON POTENTIAL
IMMIGRANTS

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Madam Speaker, I am rather disappointed that the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) is not here tonight to listen to my brief remarks. I have been asking questions for the past eight or nine weeks and I am getting just "non answers".

My question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, which I asked in the House on May 28, was not related only to the two highly questionable individuals mentioned in it, namely, former South Vietnamese General Dang Van Quang and a former CIA trained Uruguayan police officer, Nelson Bardecio. Rather, it related to just how these two notorious individuals were able to enter Canada when so many legitimate refugees and immigrants must wait months to gain entry to our country.

As you know, Madam Speaker, I have persistently asked the minister over the last several weeks why it took only a few minutes to process General Quang at Fort Chaffee, Arkansas, even though he was well identified as a four-star general, and even though our External Affairs and Immigration people in Saigon had known of his personal corruption and illegal activities while serving as President Thieu's number one man before the fall of South Vietnam.

As for Nelson Bardecio, a self-confessed torturer, bomber, and accessory to murder, I have not as yet heard