

External Affairs

questions, especially when they were loaded like the ones we have heard during the past few weeks.

I think hon. members of the house will have noted that members of the Social Credit group have not indulged in that sort of thing, especially with regard to Middle East affairs, because we felt it was too serious, that the gravity of the situation demanded a more serious attitude. I feel somewhat let down today because, as I said, there are not more people here to participate in this debate, to listen through its duration and get the information which has been given to us by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

I listened to the minister's speech this morning, and he has cleared up in my mind quite a number of things about which I had felt some misgiving. One of them was the position of the United Nations emergency force in Egypt. I had wondered about that and about the legality of the situation, but the minister cleared it up pretty completely for me this morning. I cannot help but agree in principle with his analysis.

There would appear to be some difference of opinion between the minister and the Prime Minister, something which has been exploited fully by the Leader of the Opposition, and as a consequence we have been led to believe that the government has no policy. I suppose the government has no one to blame but itself if we sometimes feel that way.

I should like to deal briefly with one or two things the minister mentioned this morning before launching into an analysis of the situation as I see it. The minister gave it as his opinion that the United Nations had put a stop to aggressive action and had prevented the spread of trouble in the Middle East. I am not trying to discount for one moment what the United Nations have done, as I am quite ready to grant that they acted as quickly as they possibly could under the circumstances and with the equipment they had with which to act. But there are some other opinions as to who did stop aggressive action in the Middle East and who prevented a further spread of trouble. I should like to quote from a speech delivered in the British House of Commons by Peter Smithers. I intend to quote only a small portion of the report of this speech which appeared in the *Fundy Fisherman*, as follows:

We now know from the Egyptian chief of staff himself that on October 29 he had issued instructions, as he was entitled to do as commander in chief of the joint Arab forces, for the other Arab states to move against Israel. We guessed correctly, as it turned out, that we were faced with

[Mr. Low.]

a general war in the Middle East in which the Soviet union would certainly take a hand to prolong the hostilities.

And then he goes on to say:

May I say on behalf of my country that it is time that our service to humanity and peace by stopping the war in time was recognized by some of those who stood by, inactive, or joined the Soviet union in condemning us.

I believe that is true, and in any analysis of the situation in fairness we must give credit for this effort to put an end to the conflict at a time when no one else seemed to be ready to do so. I think that is only fair, and I point it out merely to indicate that it is morally wrong not to recognize the service that was rendered to the world by Britain and France and—if you want to get down to it—by Israel herself.

There is no question but that when Israel moved into conflict with Egypt she was doing so because she had information concerning the Russian build-up, the accumulation of vast stores of arms in the Sinai peninsula and elsewhere; and her service to the world has certainly been to destroy a great deal of that equipment and to retard the build-up, perhaps for no less than 12 or 14 months, if not for an even longer period. We must bear these things in mind in any assessment of the situation.

This afternoon the minister told us something about the Washington diplomatic conference. I think he said representatives of the United States, France and Israel held discussions, as a result of which Israel decided to withdraw her troops from the Sinai peninsula and from Gaza. He mentioned what I think he called "understandings", or "hopes"—

Mr. Pearson: Assumptions.

Mr. Low: Assumptions on the part of Israel. It seems fantastic to me that Israel, with her very life at stake, would agree to move her troops and supplies out of these two areas without having some definite commitments from somewhere. I would like the minister to go into this a little more fully. Is it not possible that the United States did, in fact, make some specific commitments? If so, what were they? I find it difficult to believe that Israel, smart as she has proven herself to be, would move out on the basis of assumptions alone.

I would not like to claim in anything I say, Mr. Speaker, that the government of Canada, in anything it has done or can possibly do, has contributed to the cause of the trouble in the Middle East. But, as I said a moment ago, a good many people will be impressed by the fact that the government seems to be following no definite policy. I hope I am wrong in that, and if I am I would like the minister, when he replies, to lay down