

Government Orders

historically and recently at a stalemate, that something is going to have break open that pattern. It is still my wish that the parties in the region could resolve that.

• (1230)

I would also remind hon. members that there was tension with the Palestinians before Israel entered the Gaza Strip following an attack upon Israel itself, that the refugee camps that were established in the Palestinian region were established essentially after the founding of the State of Israel but before Israel moved into those territories in response to an attack upon its territory.

The complications around these issues are large and it is incumbent upon us not to over simplify them by suggesting that a simple action or outside pressure on one party or the other, or on both, is going to resolve those. That is still for the future to decide.

We are all in this Chamber I think sensitive to the fact that what happens in that region affects all of us. I do think it is incumbent upon us to recognize that we have some allies who have supported us in other situations, that we must try to come to grips with what those threads are that have wrought such a black fabric in a region that is fraught with tension before we make judgments upon what those solutions may be.

I think there have been provocations on both sides in this dispute. I do not think anyone would argue that. I do not think any friend of Israel would argue that. But I do want to assure many of the friends of Israel in Canada, many of those in the Canadian Jewish community with family in that region, that many of us are daily conscious of the decisions we take and the impact that they will have on those families and on that nation.

Of course, there are other nations involved and of course there are other people at risk, not least of whom are our own who are there defending the values that we stand for and the United Nations and are doing so at risk to themselves. But I want to say to those people in the Jewish community in Canada that whatever is happening in the Middle East, there are many of us in this Chamber who are thinking of them, their friends and relatives and

their support for that region, and for that state, that many of us have also shown.

I watched the people in the region as they prepared to deal with a gas attack. One of my very early memories is of my father, who was going overseas during World War II when I was a very young girl. I tried on his gas mask just before he sailed away on a ship from Halifax harbour. I have been thinking every day since of what people in the region of the gulf and in Israel are facing. Those memories are very strong in my mind as I know they are in others who actually dealt with and were in battles in Europe during the war, which I certainly was not.

But I think that for all of us who desire peace and for all of us who value our friendship with states in the region that we wish a speedy end. That is what the government has stood for and that is what we continue to stand for.

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Madam Speaker, I have only a comment to make. I just want to take this opportunity to thank the minister for the very sensitive manner in which she has looked at the issue. I think that one broadens not only for the Israelis, for whom of course my heart is very much there, but for all ethnic minorities who live in that area. It is a very trying time. For all the families who have extended family in that region, I know that that is where our heart lies and that is where our concern is.

I can only hope that with Godspeed and our prayers we will have a very short-lived war and the problems that come from it will see the kind of resolution on a bilateral basis that will make good sense and bring the harmony that we are looking for in that area.

Mrs. McDougall: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for her support. Certainly, by my statement, I did not want to suggest that there were not others at risk, and I know she is not implying this. Clearly, there are many lives and groups at risk. I wanted to say that many of us believe that Israel is in a special situation because it had been singled out as a first target, and that in standing aside, the government and the people of Israel have done a service to world peace and to all of us. I say that not in an effort to be trite or to minimize the efforts that others have made.