

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, December 6, 1971

The House met at 2 p.m.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF ELECTION OF LATE J.S.  
WOODSWORTH

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, pursuant to notice which I gave to Your Honour this morning, and as a matter of privilege, I should like to draw the attention of the House to the significance of this day in Canada's history. It was on December 6, 1921, exactly 50 years ago today, that the late J. S. Woodsworth was first elected to the Parliament of Canada. We in this party are of course deeply conscious of our debt to him for what he did for our movement. I think it might also be said that few men have made a mark on the history of this country such as that made by the former member for Winnipeg North Centre, whom I had the honour to succeed when he died in 1942.

I believe members of the House might be interested in knowing that his widow, Mrs. Lucy Woodsworth, now 97 years of age, is resident in Ottawa at St. Vincent hospital. It may well be that members would like our greetings to be extended to her on this occasion. If so, I know of no one more qualified to do that than the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Woodsworth, the distinguished member for Vancouver-Kingsway (Mrs. MacInnis).

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

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## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

STATEMENT BY MINISTER ON OUTBREAK OF WAR  
BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, I know that I speak for all members of the House when I express the government's profound regret that open war has broken out on the subcontinent of India.

General hostilities erupted between India and Pakistan last Friday. Each government has accused the other of having started this latest stage in their tense confrontation which began some eight months ago. Reports of the fighting are contradictory. It seems fairly clear that neither side has yet heavily committed its forces on the western front; in and around East Pakistan, however, Indian forces are exerting considerable efforts to gain territory. India has recognized the provisional government of Bangla Desh.

An emergency session of the United Nations Security Council was called Saturday evening on the initiative of nine of its members to consider the deteriorating situation. It met again on Sunday and will meet also this afternoon. A number of resolutions have been presented but no consensus is yet in sight. Our ambassador at the United Nations is in close touch with events there and is keeping us informed. It is our hope that the Security Council will find enough common ground to be able to act decisively. In the absence of such action, it will be necessary to consider what the General Assembly could achieve.

The safety of Canadian citizens on the subcontinent has been very much in our minds this weekend. In India, there are some 1,100 Canadians registered with the High Commission in Delhi. More than a month ago, those living near the border with Pakistan were advised to consider moving to a safer location. In East Pakistan there are 40. In the early hours of this morning, at the request of the Secretary General of the United Nations, a Canadian Armed Forces C-130 aircraft was diverted to Dacca to help in the evacuation of United Nations personnel. It was intended that it should also be available to any Canadians who might not have left earlier, Commonwealth citizens and other nationals. Although a local ceasefire had been arranged by the United Nations with the Pakistani, Indian and Mukti Bahini forces which would permit the aircraft to land at Dacca, that airport was attacked at precisely the hour our aircraft was to begin its approach to the area. The aircraft returned to Bangkok safely. We trust that with renewed assurances of another local ceasefire, we shall have better success tomorrow.

• (2:10 p.m.)

In West Pakistan, where 270 Canadians are registered at the High Commission in Islamabad, those responsible on the spot have not yet concluded that action is necessary. Some time ago Canadians in the Lahore area were advised to consider moving, and it was suggested to those in Karachi that they should be prepared to leave at short notice. Yesterday nine Canadians arrived in Teheran on a commercial flight from Karachi; their families have been informed. There have been reports that other commercial flights have followed.

From the beginning Canada has been in touch with the governments of India and Pakistan at the highest levels. To the government of India we have urged patience and restraint in a situation of great difficulty. To the government of Pakistan we have stressed the urgent necessity of speeding up of a return to civilian and representative government, particularly in East Pakistan. We have been among the most concerned and engaged in the great world humanitarian effort to succor the refugees, and have latterly been directing our efforts to increased assistance to India to help relieve the burden on its budget and