

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, June 13, 1963

The house met at 2.30 p.m.

UNITED NATIONS

YEMEN—SECONING OF CANADIAN PERSONNEL TO OBSERVATION MISSION

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should like to inform the house that the Canadian government has authorized the seconding of Canadian personnel for service with the United Nations observation mission in the Yemen. As hon. members are aware, the United Nations security council on June 11 approved a resolution authorizing the secretary general to establish this observation group, whose presence in the Yemen is a prerequisite to the implementation of the undertakings which have been given by the governments of the United Arab Republic and Saudi Arabia for disengagement in the Yemen. It is hoped that this will bring about the termination of a situation in that country which has become increasingly acute since the establishment of the present republican government in September of last year, and will help to avoid the danger of the internal conflict in that country developing into more widespread hostilities throughout the area.

It is intended that a substantial proportion of the officers required for the new observation group in the Yemen will be drawn from personnel already serving in the area with the United Nations emergency force and the United Nations truce supervisory organization. Mr. Speaker, Canada has consistently played a leading role in the United Nations peace keeping operations, and it is the government's intention to strengthen this fundamental role by all practical means.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, there will be general support in all parts of the house and the country for the action announced by the Secretary of State for External Affairs. As he pointed out, the situation has become very critical, and there is need at the earliest possible date for an observer team or group from the United Nations to go into that area in Yemen in order to permit of the disengagement of some 28,000 Saudi Arabian troops which are there, and also to cut off the supplies which are being sent into that country from Saudi Arabia. However, the

minister did not refer to the question of cost, and I had hoped he would have said something in that connection.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, the costs will be borne, for the first two months certainly, by the United Arab Republic and Saudi Arabia. At the end of that period this matter will be reviewed.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The minister has mentioned the division of costs as between these two countries over the first two months. My understanding is that the U.S.S.R. wanted to restrict the period of the operation of this force to two months, and under no circumstances would agree that any of the costs should be paid, in so far as the United Nations is concerned, by other than the security council. I think the argument in this connection on the part of the U.S.S.R. is a serious one and indicates the degree of importance that the various members of the United Nations must attach to a decision being made regarding the responsibility of all nations in the United Nations to contribute a proportionate share to the costs of the peace making machinery of the United Nations.

This announcement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs, particularly the statement he made following my remark as to cost, would indicate that the problem in the United Nations as to financing these operations is still far removed from settlement. However, a makeshift arrangement has been arrived at whereby for the period of time mentioned by the minister the cost will be shared by the two countries named. I am glad that Canada is going to contribute to this operation which, as the minister said, has received the consistent support of successive Canadian governments.

Mr. R. N. Thompson (Red Deer): Mr. Speaker, I would say, on behalf of our group in this house that we lend our support to the government in its policy of taking part in this all important effort to continue the struggle for peace in the world and to prevent this from being another area adding to the conflagration of localized wars that we already have in different parts of the world.

I personally appreciate very much the fact that Canada is going to make this contribution, because I know Yemen well and the countries around it. If this situation should ever get out of hand it could certainly be