

under the administration of Mr. St. Laurent and myself, that of providing a responsible group of Canadians experienced in the operation of such a force? This would be a step which Canada could take now, and it would bring results, because everywhere in the world Canadian peace forces are recognized and appreciated.

Hon. Donald C. Jamieson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, this is one occasion upon which I can say with all sincerity that I agree with the preamble to the right hon. member's question. It is a most serious situation. Along with many other countries, we have already deplored the terrorist action which occurred in Israel and the retaliatory action which followed. Unfortunately, this diminishes the prospect of a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

As for developments since then, hon. members will be aware that yesterday I expressed the view that it would be desirable to see the withdrawal of Israeli forces from the southern part of Lebanon. This carries implicit in it the view, which I hold, that there is a need for some kind of stabilizing or peacekeeping force such as the right hon. member suggested. I made it known some months ago that Canada is prepared to consider participation in such a force if there is a proposal for its establishment and if it receives the approval of the United Nations, something which, as the right hon. gentleman knows, would be necessary if the force is to be effective. Events over the weekend will determine whether or not a call for such a course will be made in a formal way. I believe the President of the United States made a suggestion to that effect yesterday.

As to the matter of a discussion in the House, I would have no objection, but the timing is important. It would be a question of determining whether the actions of the various governments concerned have reached a point at which discussion among ourselves in Canada would be useful and beneficial. I will undertake to keep the House advised as fully as possible. We are prepared to look at peacekeeping if a number of conditions are met, to our satisfaction, including the fundamental one that such a force would be able to carry out its mandate and restore a high level of stability to an extremely troubled and perilous situation.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The answer given to me is in keeping with what I had expected, except for the last three or four lines when the minister made available an escape hatch for Canada. Why did he include the proviso as to whether this, that or the other prerequisites are met? The force is bound to be helpful. It is bound to be effective. It is time for Canada to take the initiative, as we have in the past, instead of waiting for other nations. It is time to give a lead to peace-loving countries all over the world and to make our own contribution.

Mr. Jamieson: Now the situation is back to normal and I can disagree with the right hon. member again. The qualification I made was a studied one. The reason for it is simple and hon. members opposite should find no difficulty in accepting it. Such a peace force would of necessity require agreement, for example, from Israel. Unless Israel was prepared as one of the concerned parties—and there are others—to accept this force

and to be governed by it, we would be putting Canadian forces into a very difficult and risky situation which would be counterproductive and, would involve, as not the least of our considerations, a serious risk to their lives and to their safety. All I am saying is that the qualification is that we must be satisfied that the force can carry out the mandate it is given.

● (1132)

If you will permit me another moment, Mr. Speaker, there is also the problem, which we would obviously have to discuss, as to the role such a peacekeeping force can perform. For example, we are already very heavily committed with regard to a logistics support role on the Golan Heights and also in the Sinai. If we were asked to perform that role, we could not expand our capability; therefore, it is again a matter of defining and asking just what we can do. However, that does not diminish our commitment in any way.

I would like to emphasize that the initiative I took in the Middle East back in October I think indicates that we are, and should be, as the right hon. member has properly said, concerned and willing to act.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF ALEXANDER HAY, PRESIDENT OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE OF THE RED CROSS

Mr. Speaker: Before continuing the question period, I know hon. members will want to join with me in calling attention to the presence in our gallery of a very distinguished visitor who is on an official visit to Canada, the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Mr. Alexandre Hay.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

AVAILABILITY OF APPLICATION FORMS FOR EMPLOYMENT TAX CREDIT

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Given the fact that the employment tax credit bill, with all its shortcomings, is about all we have, and since even that cannot have its maximum effect because of the erosion of confidence in this government and the failure of the minister to bring in a budget, can the minister tell the House why it has taken so long to get the forms into the marketplace? There are parts of the country which have not yet received them. Can the minister tell us when we can expect this measure to be in place in order to have whatever effect it will have on creating jobs?

Hon. Jean Chrétien (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I understand that all the forms are in place. I do not know if the hon. member has information to the contrary, but I think his