

[Translation]

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I should like to repeat what I said earlier, that is that we agree to this arrangement providing a French version of the statement is given to us at five o'clock.

Mr. Speaker: I have the impression that it would have been simpler if these discussions had occurred earlier. I shall once more try to determine whether hon. members wish the order of the House to be subject to the condition that the minister give copies of his statement at five o'clock this afternoon.

[English]

My understanding is that the order to which I have referred will include therein the instruction that the minister will make available, in confidence, to the leaders of other parties a copy of the proposed statement in French and English. Is this agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

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EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

CANADIAN PARTICIPATION IN MIDDLE EAST PEACEKEEPING FORCE—FURTHER DISCUSSIONS WITH SECRETARY GENERAL OF UNITED NATIONS— POSTPONEMENT OF DEBATE

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I wish to inform the House that it is my intention to meet with the Secretary General of the United Nations in New York tomorrow morning to discuss further with him his request to Canada to provide a contribution to the United Nations Emergency Force in the Middle East.

The Secretary General is encountering difficulties in determining the over-all composition of the force. These difficulties relate both to the scale of Canadian participation and to such matters as whether a Warsaw Pact country ought to be included to balance the inclusion of a NATO country, and whether countries other than Canada are acceptable to all the parties concerned. The Secretary General confirmed in writing on October 28 that Canada is acceptable to the parties concerned. I feel the problems can only be satisfactorily explored by personal contact with the Secretary General.

For the moment, no Canadian personnel will be sent to the area and I do not propose, therefore, to bring forward for debate tomorrow the resolution seeking approval of parliament for Canadian participation in UNEF.

Mr. Claude Wagner (St. Hyacinthe): Mr. Speaker, we understand the predicament in which the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) finds himself. On the other hand, I must say that many questions have been raised over the past few days with regard to this subject. We understand that some of our troops are already in the Middle East and that some of them, as is evident from a television program last evening, are engaged as observers and therefore are caught in the line of fire. We would like answers to those questions, and we would like also to

Abortion

know if it is a fact that Russia is objecting to the participation of Canada in this Middle East compromise.

Therefore, I think it is essential that we have this debate tomorrow. It is fairly easy for the minister to be in touch with the United Nations Secretary General this afternoon and report back to the House tomorrow. We on this side insist that this debate take place. We would not like to find ourselves in a situation similar to that in which parliament found itself on the Viet Nam issue.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, we hope that the minister's visit to the United Nations in New York will have positive and fruitful results. We do not think that Canada should seek to take up the burden of participation in the peacekeeping force, but we do think that Canada should accept if sought. In our view any member of the United Nations is qualified, other than the great powers, but we confidently leave it to the Secretary General of the United Nations to arrange a balanced and competent force for these important tasks.

Until these matters are resolved and the minister has gone to the United Nations and returned, we see no point in going on with the debate tomorrow.

[Translation]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, undoubtedly the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) is continually in touch with the Canadian representatives to the United Nations, and he is in a position to know the progress of this organization's activity.

In certain circumstances, of course, the minister has to make important commitments and he has to do so on behalf of the government; if he has to get in touch with opposition or government members, I feel that the opposition should have something to say in the process of decision making, or at least should have the possibility of making its position recognized on the part Canada is going to play in respect of the enforcement of the cease-fire in the Middle East. I feel that the opposition has something important to say in this decision taking, because the opposition also represents our country. I feel it is important that we have a debate on this matter.

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[English]

ABORTION

SUGGESTED AMENDMENT TO CRIMINAL CODE—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

Mr. Don Blenkarn (Peel South): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity, namely the over 30,000 murders per year that take place in terms of babies aborted in this country. I therefore move, seconded by the hon. member for Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe (Mr. Madill):

That this House expresses its concern over the seeming abuse of the right to approve abortions exercised by some therapeutic abortion committees who, in considering the health of the mother are including for consideration social and economic factors and declares that the government should proceed with amendments to the Criminal Code limiting abortions to those cases where actual physical or mental danger to the life of the mother exists.