

External Affairs

on occasions and denied the request of that organization to facilitate the speedy clearance of the Suez canal. That is one instance where there was hindrance and defiance on the part of Egypt. Pressure has been brought to bear on Israel to accede to the request of the United Nations, and a similar sort of pressure has to be brought to bear on Egypt to also accede to the request of the United Nations. We have asked Israel to jeopardize its own security; therefore I maintain that we owe Israel something in return for the security which it feels it has given up.

I agree with the Leader of the Opposition when he says he has no confidence in Mr. Nasser. I do not think very many people have, especially when one recalls recent history. In 1954 Mr. Nasser's great ambition was to get the British out of the Suez canal zone, and to achieve that end he entered into negotiations with the United States which in turn brought pressure to bear on the United Kingdom. The United States was led to believe that as a result of the British leaving that part of the Middle East the opportunities for peace would be that much greater, and of course there would be in all probability an abandonment of the blockade.

That was a piece of calculated deception, for instead of the blockade being abandoned it was tightened; instead of peace becoming obvious the raids increased in numbers and violence. Now that all the one-time invading forces are out it is possible that Nasser is once again showing his hand. He wants a civil administration to go back into the Gaza strip. From there it will be but a step to wanting military forces back in the Gaza strip. Then what happens to the UNEF; then what happens to the United Nations if it admits that? If he could do so I should like to have the minister give us some indication of what government policy would be in that event.

The situation at this moment is most critical, and it is most unfortunate that in the most powerful nation in the west, the United States, we find the President once more at sea, going on a trip to Bermuda for his health, which I hope improves. We have the secretary of state in Asia, out of this hemisphere, and at times I think he is out of this world. Who is responsible now for policy in the United States? There is no one I know who can be said to be directly in charge. Therefore I fear, having regard to the ability of the oil lobby, that it will be a predominant influence in Washington just now, and that I regret.

We must induce Nasser and the representatives of the other Arab states to renounce the state of war they are maintaining against Israel. The minister posed some interesting questions when he spoke at the United

Nations on November 2. I quote from page 10 of the white paper entitled "The Crisis in the Middle East" as follows:

The armed forces of Israel and of Egypt are to withdraw or, if you like, to return to the armistice lines, where presumably, if this is done, they will once again face each other in fear and hatred. What then? What then, six months from now? Are we to go through all this again? Are we to return to the status quo? Such a return would not be to a position of security, or even a tolerable position, but would be a return to terror, bloodshed, strife, incidents, charges and counter-charges, and ultimately another explosion which the United Nations armistice commission would be powerless to prevent and possibly even to investigate.

Those fears are well founded. By now the minister may have found some answers to those fears, and if he has done so we will await them anxiously and with the greatest interest.

Mr. Solon E. Low (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I hope that in the time I intend to take this afternoon I shall not repeat too many of the things that have been said here today during this most interesting debate, which has continued since shortly after eleven o'clock this morning. There are a good many things hon. members have said with which I can agree, and there are other things that have been said with which I cannot agree.

I was surprised to see so few people present in the chamber during this debate, which is of such grave importance. I would have thought the chamber would have remained full for the entire duration of this debate. When I looked around this morning and saw that only the two smaller groups in this house were fairly well up to strength my heart sank, because I could not bring myself to feel that a sufficient number of people are taking this Middle East situation very seriously.

One thing about which we have complained in this house and outside the house for some months past has been the lack of reliable information. We have been subjected to all kinds of reports, propaganda, misstatements and that sort of thing in the press. Members of the official opposition particularly have asked questions practically every day and have tried to get information. One trouble was that they did not give notice of those questions, and as a consequence the Prime Minister or the acting Secretary of State for External Affairs was not able to supply the specific information asked for. As a consequence things were further confused. I am sorry that has been the case, but I do not believe anybody can be blamed more than the members of this house who have failed in their duty to give sufficient notice of