

Mr. Axworthy: Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a question on another important matter to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In light of the recent discussions which were held with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Israel, and requests which we have received from other allies, such as the United States and Egypt, concerning the commitment of Canada to replacing the Australian contingent in the Sinai Peninsula peace force, is the Secretary of State for External Affairs able to tell us today whether, on behalf of Canada, the Government will make that commitment and become part of the peacekeeping unit in the Sinai?

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Member for his question. He noted appropriately that the request has come to Canada from both Egypt and Israel, as well as other countries which are interested. He will know that the Australian commitment ends in slightly less than 13 months. The Government of Canada is seriously considering the request. We expect to have a response for the requesting Governments within the next few weeks, certainly in time for decisions to be made by the countries which might be affected.

GOVERNMENT POSITION

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg-Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, I thank the Hon. Minister for that response. We can take from the response that the Government is considering, in a positive way, the possibility of becoming involved. We would like to know, at this point in time, what kind of planning is taking place, both within the Government and with our allies, in terms of the composition of the force, the kind of contingent which might be brought forward, and the kind of commitments which would be required. Can he give us some indication of what those requests were and whether in fact we are now in a position to respond to them?

● (1440)

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, contrary to the practice of former Governments, I have made it a practice on matters like the North Warning System, the Strategic Defence Initiative, and others, to call the House of Commons into my confidence, when there is something to announce.

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Clark (Yellowhead): That is a practice which this Government has renewed, and which we intend to continue. We are now at a stage of actively considering the request. Once that consideration is completed, I will advise Hon. Members of all aspects of that decision.

Oral Questions

ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

ACID RAIN—CANADA-UNITED STATES DISCUSSIONS

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of the Environment. According to today's press reports it looks as if the highlight of the summit meeting this weekend between the Prime Minister and the President of the United States will be yet another agreement to study further the effects of acid rain in this country. Acid rain has been studied to death, and the last thing we need in our country, or in the United States, is a further study. Would the Minister assure this House that when the Prime Minister meets with Mr. Reagan this coming Sunday he will demand that the U.S. Government not just enter into another study but provide some concrete program finally to find a solution to this very serious problem?

[Translation]

Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I suggest that if my hon. friend from the New Democratic Party would compare the performance of the previous Government with what we have accomplished over the past six months, there is ground for optimism.

[English]

Mr. Young: We know what the previous Government did, and you are not doing much better.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT DEMAND ACTION

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): What we want to know from the Minister of the Environment is whether members of this Government are going to stop being a bunch of pussycats on this issue—

Some Hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Young:—and demand that the U.S. Government finally do something about acid rain?

[Translation]

Hon. Suzanne Blais-Grenier (Minister of the Environment): Mr. Speaker, I am not sure how to answer that question. Recent polls have indicated, I believe, that Canadians are quite satisfied with this government's approach, and that is the same approach we are going to adopt this coming Monday in Quebec City.

* * *

[English]

AGRICULTURE

CATTLE INSPECTION FEES

Mr. Bill Vankoughnet (Hastings-Frontenac-Lennox and Addington): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Agriculture. The proposed inspection fee of 67 cents per head of cattle, or a minimum fee of \$125 for less