

drive them wholly into the arms of Russia and its satellites as the only source of supply. It might perpetuate inequalities between states in respect of their defensive capacities, thereby creating fear and insecurity; and encouraging aggression. One state might, for instance, have its own defence industries, and another—its neighbour—might be wholly dependent on imported defence equipment. An embargo could not possibly operate fairly in such cases, and might indeed encourage armed conflict over disputed territory. I can assure you that this is no hypothetical argument.

Let us see, for instance, how such an embargo—if it could have been agreed on and enforced internationally—would have operated in the Middle East in respect of Israel and its Arab neighbours. I gather from observations made in this House and outside that this is the policy that is advocated by at least certain members of opposition parties.

This area has been one of tension and unrest and indeed danger from the very day that the State of Israel was created. That creation—it should not be forgotten—was the result of a United Nations decision which Canada supported. If the embargo principle had been adopted, Israel would have been completely powerless to defend her very existence; unless she had agreed in desperation to throw herself into the arms of communist suppliers. If it had suited their purposes, and for a price—and it would have been a high price—the Moscow government which controlled these suppliers would have been quite happy to arrange such a deal.

An alternative, which could be in hon. members' minds, would have been to permit certain quantities and types of military equipment to go to Israel during this period of tension and to allow nothing whatsoever to go to any Arab state in any circumstances. That would, of course, have been considered as an unfriendly policy by those states with which Canada has normal diplomatic relations. Neither this policy nor that of the complete embargo for both sides has, so far as I know, been adopted by any country. Indeed a policy of control which has been adopted by the United Kingdom, the United States and France, the policy which has been accepted by the free world, is that which we ourselves are now following.

Exchange of Information

Another important principle which we have followed is that of consultation and exchange of information about orders and requests—except those of no significance in quantity or nature—with certain governments who have special responsibilities in this field. We do that so that one country may know what the others are doing and thereby ensure that so far as possible the principles that I have mentioned above are adhered to.

If, for instance, we are asked to supply some ammunition for 25-pounders for a particular country—and we have been asked for that, and it is still before Cabinet—we try to find out, before taking any action, not only whether such an order would be excessive having regard to the number of guns involved, and existing stocks, but whether orders for this ammunition have also been received by other governments. The responsibility for the decision, however, is of course ours.

Now, what is the procedure by which this policy is carried out?

Under the law, as I have said, the export permit must be given by the Minister of Trade and Commerce. Before doing so, if the destination is one