

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. A. B. Patterson (Fraser Valley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to direct a further question to the right hon. Prime Minister. Is the government considering the advisability of making continuing contributions to relief and the assistance of refugees conditional upon sincere efforts being made to rehabilitate the refugees so they will not be a continuing problem throughout the years?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I think this is a very important point. Before the outbreak of the conflict a few weeks ago, we associated with our contributions not a condition but a statement that some effective effort must be made to deal with this problem if we were not to continue making contributions merely to keep people on relief. We did not make that a condition because we did not feel we could do it in that way and then have the refugees themselves suffer because of the absence of relief. If all member countries had made such a condition there would be no relief at all. We have done our best, however, to create the impression that we cannot go on indefinitely meeting these emergency situations by monetary relief. We have made that clear and we will make it clear in connection with our additional contribution.

[Later:]

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, a moment ago I asked the reason for the omission of the United Nations force operating between the two areas, the Arab and Israeli areas, from the four points given by the minister at the UN, and the Prime Minister replied that he felt this had been dealt with in the speech by the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs why he did not press for the establishment of a United Nations presence in force between the armies, to use the words of the Prime Minister, and that that presence should operate on both sides of the boundary. The Prime Minister mentioned that this was dealt with in the speech made by the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I ask the Secretary of State for External Affairs why he was so delightfully uncertain in this regard, because the reference to it in his speech was as follows:

Canada supplied the first commander, General Burns, and a sizeable contingent to the force. UNEF was the first peace keeping force to be established by the United Nations. I am convinced that its record of accomplishment and service will be a legacy upon which the United Nations will be able to draw in future. This record will be far more important in the verdict of history than the current differences of opinion over the circumstances of its withdrawal.

If the minister still believes in the force, why didn't Canada come out for direct operation rather than pay encomiums to the record of history and the legacy of the future, and say we want a United Nations force strong enough to preserve the peace in the Middle East?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Speaker, I think we did both those very things. First of all I took occasion to pay tribute to the contribution made by the United Nations emergency force, and I underlined that I thought that contribution was more important than the controversy over the circumstances of its withdrawal. But I did say with regard to the United Nations truce supervision organization, which is an existing presence of the United Nations, that Canada envisaged it as having a continuing responsibility not only with regard to the withdrawal of forces but also for the function of observation. We hope that this organization, already established by the security council, will have not only its present but also an expanded role. However, that is something that remains to be decided once the substantive issues now before the general assembly have been dealt with.

Mr. Jack Roxburgh (Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the right hon. Prime Minister with regard to the refugee problem. A couple of days ago the Prime Minister stated that Canada would be willing to take a certain number of Arab refugees. If we do take some of these refugees I want an assurance that it will not interfere with our present immigration policy which we have established, to bring in some 200,000-odd immigrants this year.

Mr. Pearson: I think, Mr. Speaker, any contribution, as part of a United Nations effort, that we could make to this problem by taking in certain refugees, would have to be considered apart from and beyond our ordinary immigration pattern, that is to say, the flow of immigrants coming in in the ordinary way.

Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a related question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. Has the military commander of the United Nations emergency force made a report to the secretary general of the United Nations concerning the steps that were taken for the withdrawal of the force, the attacks that were made on that force and the casualties that were suffered? And if there is such a report, will it be made available to the House of Commons?