

Bell Canada directly that it cannot change its receiver program until the large groups of impaired and defenceless Canadians are provided with equal access to telephone use within the Bell system.

Mr. Jim Fleming (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications): Mr. Speaker, as most hon. members are aware, Bell Canada and the Steering Committee for the Hearing Impaired have been trying for some time to resolve their differences created by Bell's plans to upgrade the existing telephone receiver at a considerable saving which hopefully would be of benefit to consumers. While the two sides have not been able to reach an agreement, it should be noted that the matter is not easily resolved. While the concerns of the hearing impaired are very important, even the Consumers Association of Canada hesitated to support a resolution outlining the demands of the hearing impaired at the recent CAC meeting in Winnipeg.

The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission has now—if I can make that correction for the hon. member—at the senior staff level heard representatives from both Bell Canada and the hearing impaired. The executive committee of the CRTC will in the very near future be considering both sides of the issue in an effort to find a constructive course of action which will bear in mind the best interests of the hearing impaired and the consumer at large. I know that the CRTC will do its best to lead these two parties to a positive conclusion in the best interests of all Canadians, and particularly bearing in mind the needs of the hearing impaired.

My minister has asked me to assure the House that meanwhile she and her officials will continue to watch the situation closely and to encourage Bell and the steering committee to find a solution acceptable to both.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS—ALLEGATION ISRAEL HAS STOCK PILE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, on June 16 I asked the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs:

In view of the government's posture of devout nuclear virginity and stern anti-proliferation of nuclear arms, may I ask if in the light of sustained and widespread reports of possession of substantial nuclear stock piles by the Republic of Israel, the minister can advise if the government of Canada has made any investigation of, or inquiry into, the serious allegations and, if so, has it cautioned the friendly government of Israel regarding the danger of adding further highly incendiary elements to the already explosive Middle East situation?

I was amazed that no reply was given to this question dealing as it did with nuclear weaponry, a matter I would think of some considerable importance. The minister was abroad and I am sure the parliamentary secretary was on official duty, but the system here provides for questions to be taken by an acting minister.

On March 23, under the provisions of Standing Order 58, this House had a full length debate on the issue of proliferation of nuclear weapons. At that time the minister spoke at length about the issue and Canada's zealous devotion to non-proliferation; there were references to the Club of London, and a long narrative of our assertions and exertions on the noble side of this matter. But I am impressed by the lack of response to or visible concern about serious

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and recurring reports of the possession, by Israel, of a stockpile of nuclear bombs. The reports do not deal with peaceful uses of atomic energy but with weaponry.

It has been something of an "open secret" for some time that Israel has nuclear warlike capacity. As recently as April 12 *Time* magazine carried a chilling story about the possession of nuclear bombs by a country in the most dangerous and explosive area of the world today. It records:

At a briefing for a group of American space experts in Washington recently, an official for the Central Intelligence Agency estimated that Israel had between ten and 20 nuclear weapons "available for use." In fact, *Time* has learned, Israel possesses a nuclear arsenal of 13 atomic bombs, assembled, stored and ready to be dropped on enemy forces from specially equipped Kfir and Phantom fighters or Jericho missiles. These weapons have a 20-kiloton yield, roughly as powerful as those that obliterated Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The newsstory goes on to relate that in the face of Arab victories in the early days of the 1973 war, the then premier, Mrs. Meir, authorized the use of the Doomsday weapons. Actually no bombs were activated, the Israelis having reached a much more successful stage in the conventional warfare.

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Most of us will recall that serious and mysterious red alert sent out by the U.S. in 1973. *Time's* explanation is worrisome to say the least:

Did Israel's nuclear capability play a part in the U.S. global military alert of Oct. 25, 1973? According to *Time's* sources, the Israelis were convinced that the Russians had learned of the newly acquired nuclear potential, possibly through a Soviet Cosmos spy satellite over the Middle East. What is certain is that on Oct. 13, the Russians dispatched nuclear warheads from Nikolaev—the naval base at Odessa—to Alexandria, to be fitted on Russian Scud missiles already based in Egypt. The U.S., in turn, detected the Soviet warheads as the ship carrying them passed through the Bosphorus on Oct. 15 and issued a warning to Moscow by means of a world military alert.

Many years may elapse before we will know how close we came to a dreadful nuclear confrontation. It is difficult to know how fully accurate is the *Time* story, although the account of the Dimona nuclear installation in the Negev seems authentic enough. I would not suggest that Canada ally itself to one or other of the Middle East protagonists. All I have ever sought is a policy of genuine objectivity. But surely there should be no failure to recognize the awful danger which the introduction of nuclear bombs would bring upon that region and indeed all of us.

I think we can be sure that the use of nuclear arms by one of the parties to the dispute would invite and assure intrusion by the great powers, and after that who can describe or delineate the range and extent of the chaos into which we should all be plunged?

One of the most astute Canadian observers of the Middle East is Reverend Dr. A. C. Forrest, Editor of the *United Church Observer*, who wrote a stirring, challenging editorial, "Israel and the Bomb: Why Doesn't Somebody Scream?" It is an article to which I invite the minister's attention. The following is an extract:

An astonishing silence followed in the wake of *Time's* disclosure of Israel's arsenal of atomic bombs and near use of them. Press and radio in Canada didn't seem to be surprised or alarmed. And the pulpits, church courts, editorial writers and other would-be prophets and opinion-makers seemed to have nothing to say.