

Arab-Israeli War

nations which supply arms to these countries, not only in the Middle East but in all countries of the Third World, to put an end to that hypocrisy, to that destructive trade and insist that instead of supplying destructive weapons, they would rather supply means of production. That will be much more useful.

We often hear economists or demographers expressing fear that after the year two thousand earth will have difficulty feeding its inhabitants. In reading reports from the technicians and engineers who have worked there, especially in the Mount Sinai region, we see that they were unable to find enough sand to build concrete wells and had to use eastern sand which was brought by Greek boats.

This proves therefore that there is no sand in that desert, only argillaceous silt. With a little water such soil could grow green and produce. Mr. Speaker, instead of teaching these countries how to destroy one another, let us teach them how to produce and feed their people. By increasing food production in these areas, we shall not run the risk of coming up against other food producers since we are being told that inflation happens to be the result of a lack in production. Therefore, let us produce more.

Mr. Speaker, what we hope for tonight is to cease providing these countries with tools of destruction and provide them with the possibilities to live. I am convinced that they will learn quickly how to live in peace. They are seeking peace and are entitled to it. Therefore, let us stop fanning the fire so that peace may exist in the Middle East as it must everywhere else.

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, an ancient philosopher once said: I am human and nothing human fails to move me. Today, we must all endorse this statement, not for reasons of universal culture and humanism, but simply for the purpose of survival, both individual and collective.

Tonight, I should like to take part in this discussion not in my capacity of member of the government or even of member of parliament, because in the face of a conflict such as the one which recently occurred in the Middle East, we must admit that our power and authority is very limited. It is therefore more as a Canadian and as a man that I should like to take part in this discussion and share the feelings of other Canadians and members of parliament.

First of all, I should like to express the feeling of anxiety of all Canadians whatever their origin as concerns the resumption of hostilities in the Middle East. Within 25 years, we have seen four major conflicts in that area, as well as a permanent situation of latent conflict, whether it be terrorism within the boundaries of the countries involved or outside these countries. I think there is no continent which has been spared the effects of this terrorism during the past 25 years.

We are now faced with a new conflict which does not seem about to end. This conflict will perhaps claim more lives than any other of the previous ones, and if it goes on for a long time, we shall certainly witness the disruption, if not the total destruction, of weak economies in most cases, in which the procurement of arms absorbs a considerable share of the budget which could be used for so

[Mr. Laprise.]

many other purposes in the development of those countries.

Our concern grows over the implication of large powers in the present conflict and their inability to agree with one another within the Security Council of the United Nations. We take alarm at the evolution of a situation where, once again, small and middle powers might be used as simple pawns in a game whose rules are dictated by other countries. We take alarm at the possibility of a larger conflict because of the participation of third powers.

That feeling of concern is coupled with a deep sadness at seeing the failure of so many efforts over 25 years. It was with great enthusiasm that 25 years ago, the world welcomed the creation of the Israel State by the United Nations, and Canada participated through its vote in the United Nations. The creation of that new state raised many issues and left a number of unsolved problems in that region of the world, the most well known and difficult being the case of Palestinian refugees, and that problem has never been solved in spite of concerted efforts by the United Nations as well as small and large powers during all that period. Finally, we again failed in spite of all efforts made by the world during that period.

So it is with a feeling of relative helplessness and failure that we are here tonight when another war is raging in the Middle East. There is some danger that this feeling of helplessness causes us not only to become discouraged in the face of this situation, but even worse, to become indifferent.

And yet, even if only for brotherly solidarity with all men who suffer in this dispute, the civilian population, the soldiers who die or are injured, the families who suffer, even if only for brotherly solidarity towards all these people, we cannot remain indifferent. And to refuse to be discouraged does not mean either to indulge in flights of oratory and bombastic statements. It means very simply to humbly accept a role suited to us as a country and to take a position in keeping with the ideals of our foreign policy and worthy of respect at home as well as abroad.

Such has been the position taken by Canada for many years now, and I was happy to hear tonight the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) state clearly and appropriately the position of our country in such a tragic situation. For more than two decades, Canada has supplied military personnel to the United Nations peacekeeping brigade in that area of the Middle East. Moreover, Canada comes third among all the countries of the world who contribute to the United Nations agency for the relief of Palestine refugees, and following the 1967 war, Canada took part in the drafting of Resolution 242 of the Security Council that was passed in November 1967.

Today we reaffirm unreservedly our support of the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign state within secure boundaries recognized by the international community and especially by the neighbours of Israel. This also means that the sovereignty, the territorial integrity and the political independence of every state in the area must be respected and acknowledged and also that their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries, free from threats or acts of force, must be respected as stated in Resolution 242 of the Security Council.