

*The Address—Mr. Pearson*

deliberations. In this way the people of Canada themselves could be brought more intimately into contact with the processes, the aspirations and the problems of their government institution. This might have quite an effect on the attitudes, the words and the manner of our debates, particularly if we knew they were going into the drawing rooms of the nation.

If I may be permitted a personal reminiscence, when I was sitting in the chair as president of the United Nations general assembly I was, as is my custom, doodling while a long speech was being made by a delegate. I do not know whether this would happen if we should have television cameras in this chamber but in those days the cameras could take close-ups from long range. While I was sitting there doodling I received a note from one of our delegates in the delegates' lounge who was watching the proceedings on television. His note read: "The television camera is on your hand; stick to those geometric patterns." We might have to be a little more careful if we have television in the house, and perhaps we should start in the committee on external affairs.

**Mr. Diefenbaker:** Is that the only place they doodle?

**Mr. Knowles:** There are no geometrics there.

**Mr. Pearson:** In this way the people of Canada might be given a more meaningful picture of our debates, and the Canadian people might then get a better idea of the problems and difficulties we face in trying to govern this vast country in these most complicated and fast changing times.

I should like to conclude by saying a word about one aspect of international affairs. There may be an opportunity during this debate for the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) to take part, during which time he would deal at greater length with these matters. My right hon. friend said that one of the subjects for an amendment might have been—I hope I am quoting him correctly—pusillanimous neutrality with regard to Viet Nam. The alternative to neutrality is involvement; we can leave the "pusillanimous" part out. Involvement means supporting one side or the other. I do not think it would improve our opportunities in working for peace if we took an active position as a government, with the responsibility of government, on one side or the other in the particularly difficult and dangerous situation

[Mr. Pearson.]

in Viet Nam, because it is a dangerous situation and is, I think, causing more anxiety today than it has at any time since I have been trying to follow it. I think the present situation is making it more difficult for diplomatic initiatives to succeed in the direction of negotiation and peace and, if I may say so, there is no person in the western world who has worked harder to bring about negotiations for peace than the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

● (5:30 p.m.)

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Pearson:** If that is our objective, and of course it is our objective to do what we can with the means at our disposal, I do not think that as a responsible government it would be wise or desirable or necessary for us to publicly condemn or publicly proclaim. I think it is better for us to play our part as a member of the international commission and of the international community and work in a quiet, not spectacular but as effective a way as possible, to help bring about an end of hostilities and to work also as a good friend and neighbour of the United States of America, which does not prevent our speaking out when there is an obvious and inescapable duty to do so, whatever may be our responsibility as a government. But I think there is imposed on us the obligation not to do that unless it is inescapable; otherwise I believe we would not be able to act in a way in which our suggestions would be listened to by the United States government when we put them forward through the channels of diplomacy.

My increasing anxiety in regard to Viet Nam, which I know is shared by a great many people, arises out of my reading of the situation which indicates that the possibility of early negotiation has receded, that a quick military victory is not possible nor a military solution.

**Mr. Herridge:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Pearson:** The situation, then, in these circumstances becomes more dangerous internationally. I have no comment, of course, to make on the effect of a prolonged military struggle on the United States itself. If the fighting goes on, it seems to me likely that its scale will increase—I believe the word we have to use now is "escalate"—and the ultimate result of this is an increasing threat that fighting will not only increase but expand and