

*Supply—External Affairs*

Now, Mr. Chairman, I would like to turn for a few moments to the world situation. I suppose in a general fashion the best way to describe it at the moment is to say it is a mess, and I suppose one could be pardoned for asking what has happened to statesmanship in the world, and for inquiring the whereabouts of our statesmen. In view of the manner in which the situation has steadily deteriorated a person could be excused for thinking they had at last chucked up the job and gone off on a fishing trip leaving the office boys to decide policy. The stenographers, I am certain, would sometimes do a better job.

We all hope, and there has been at least some reason to hope, that the Geneva conference would get down to business without delay and work out some kind of peace treaty for Korea and at least an armistice in Indo-China. We were hopeful of that and I certainly have not lost my hope yet by any means. We had hoped that France would be able to hold the communist-led Viet Minh at Dien Bien Phu, at least until the conference called a cease-fire, for that would have strengthened France's position tremendously. I was hopeful that France would have the good sense to give the people of the provinces in Indo-China some satisfactory guarantee of early independence on a political basis of which we could all be proud.

I was hopeful too that the western nations would go to the conference united on a firm policy with respect to Indo-China as well as the whole of southeast Asia. But France demonstrated, unfortunately, and I say this sadly and not with any desire to be critical, how left-wing sympathies can demoralize the people and render a country almost impotent.

We have all had to pay tribute to the gallantry of the French forces who put up such a marvellous defence at Dien Bien Phu. But their gallant stand and heroism were useless while impotence and indecision governed everything back in France where direction and wherewithal had to come from. The world was disgusted and saddened at the callous refusal of left-wing members of the French parliament to stand with their countrymen in a moment of silence out of respect to the men of their own flesh and blood who had died in the defence of Dien Bien Phu. France is not the only country that has been rendered almost or completely impotent by communist paralysis. To a greater or lesser degree every country in the world has been affected by it. But thank God some countries have roused themselves to the danger and are doing their best to clean up their own houses and put them in order.

[Mr. Low.]

Unfortunately, Britain seems at this time not to be able to give the kind of leadership that is expected and required of her in a world of confusion. There is only one good reason for it that I can see, and that is the effects of the paralysis of which I have already spoken which, if not checked, get so strong as to turn statesmen from statesmanship to expediency.

As a consequence, everybody has been waiting around expecting everybody else to decide what to do in Indo-China and while they have been blundering along the communists have been progressing successfully from one objective to another until today Hanoi, and the rich rice plains of that country, are in danger of capture by the Viet Minh.

I realize some of the difficulties in the way of achieving unity amongst the western nations and of deciding on a firm policy. I know that democratic countries cannot do more than their people are prepared to allow them to do. But I am certain in my own mind that if every means available were used to inform the Canadian, United States and British people to make them aware of the dangers and the possible solutions to the problems involved at Geneva, they would be prepared—and I am speaking of all the people generally now—to do whatever is necessary to preserve their freedom and establish their security.

Let it not be forgotten for one moment that the freedom, future security, happiness and well-being of every individual in these countries is involved in what happens at Geneva. The stakes are high, and that part of the game has to be played mighty carefully. However, in our part of the world I fear that the people generally have not been made aware of the dangers and the possible solutions to the problems. Consequently they are confused and hesitant about what should be done and what they are prepared to sacrifice to bring our cause to triumph. Our people have somehow got to be made to understand, and when I say our people I mean not only the people of Canada but of all the free nations of the world, that there is a great cause and that that cause is worth struggling for.

On October 31, 1942, not very long after Britain's darkest hour of the late war, Prime Minister Churchill spoke to a group of about 3,000 mine owners and mine workers delegates at some point in England. In the course of his speech the Prime Minister is reported to have said these words:

I sometimes have a feeling of interference. I want to stress that. I have a feeling sometimes that some guiding hand has interfered. I have a feeling that we have a guardian because we've a