

The Address—Mr. Knowles

the United Nations, it seems to us that we should get this debate over as soon as we can so the Secretary of State for External Affairs might get back to New York and get on with the job.

We offer no apology for supporting, on occasion, policies brought before parliament by the government, even though we may oppose that government. When, in our view, the government brings before this house something that is wrong, something that is detrimental to the interests of Canada, we say so. Indeed, we do more than say so; we do everything we can to block the government when it proposes something that we believe is wrong. That is our duty on occasions such as that. But by the same token, Mr. Speaker, when the government lays before the House of Commons policies which we believe are right, despite our being in political opposition, we should support those policies. We feel, indeed, that any party that expects to have its integrity respected in the country should follow that course and should put aside party bickering, should set aside partisan interests, and support the government when the government brings down policies which are correct, which are in the interests of Canadian people and which are designed to further peace in the world.

On this occasion, however, there is more at stake than the integrity of the political parties that make up this House of Commons. We feel that at the present time the very strength, the very authority of the United Nations is at stake. We are satisfied that with good Canadian leadership at New York in recent weeks the United Nations has staked out a correct course. The United Nations has shown that it has authority; but, Mr. Speaker, when the person who gave a lead to the United Nations, as did the Secretary of State for External Affairs, comes back to his own parliament and finds here bickering and opposition, carping criticism, such as we have had the last three days, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that that tends to weaken the strength and the authority of the United Nations.

There has been talk in this House of Commons during the last few days about appeasing Nasser; there have been suggestions that Canada was putting itself in the position of being humiliated before this dictator of Egypt. Well, I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that if Colonel Nasser is today standing up and talking big, one of the reasons is that he is aware of the fact that the person who in the United Nations proposed a policy which the United Nations is now seeking to implement is having difficulty getting full support for that policy

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back in the Canadian House of Commons. I suggest that if my friends to the right, the members of the Progressive Conservative party, want to talk strong to Nasser, as they say they do, one of the ways to do it is for Canada to speak with a united voice in support of United Nations action at this time. I believe that in doing so we would be giving expression to the views of the vast majority of the Canadian people.

The Canadian people are satisfied, Mr. Speaker, that the best that was possible was done at the United Nations at the beginning of this month. Canada played a good part there; our leaders played an effective role on behalf of the people of Canada. As one who on many occasions, on most occasions, in this house, opposes the government because of the wrong policies it brings forth and because of its many failures, it seems to me on this occasion we should be giving the government all the support we possibly can.

Mr. Fulton: We do not agree.

Mr. Knowles: There is also talk in this session, Mr. Speaker, about the commonwealth of nations, and the suggestion is being made that somehow or other Canada has done something to weaken the position, to weaken the authority, of the commonwealth of nations. I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the very opposite is the case.

Mr. Fulton: This government has been doing that for five years.

Mr. Knowles: After all, if in recent weeks, there has been any strain put upon the ties that bind the commonwealth together, that strain was not created by Canada. Indeed, I would say that strain was not created by the British people. It was created by a decision taken by the present government of the United Kingdom. In the view of most of the nations of the world, in the view of many people, a wrong decision was made by the Eden government when a decision was made to disregard the rule of law and to take the law into that government's own hands.

What did Canada do in that situation? Did Canada take steps that weakened the position of the commonwealth? On the contrary, Mr. Speaker, it seems to us that what Canada did was to save the moral authority of the commonwealth. What Canada did was to speak out with a clear conscience for the maintenance of the rule of law by taking such steps as could be taken to get back to the rule of law, to mend the breach that had been created; and because of that stand it seems to me that in the end the commonwealth will