

Foreign Policy

What we have been urging is that the government publicly declare itself in favour of those policies advocated by the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Gordon) about whom I should like to say a few words later and who I notice has now left the house.

An hon. Member: He is your man now. Is he running your party?

Mr. Lewis: He is not our man and is not running our party. I may succeed later in enlightening the hon. member, but I am not sure. I know the President of the Privy Council had good reason for leaving, but we have been pressing for two or three years that the government follow precisely the policy he enunciated in his recent speech. The Secretary of State for External Affairs suggests that we are asking him to betray confidences. No one is doing that. I think every member of this house appreciates that there are some discussions which he, members of his department or envoys have had with other governments which he cannot disclose. No one expects him to do this.

I believe all of us wish that from time to time the minister's answers were a little less clothed in incomprehensible verbiage and that his circumlocutions were a little less "circum" and a little more "locution". No one, however, expects him to betray confidences. Personally I think I would appreciate it much more if the minister simply said, "I cannot answer the question; I am not in a position to give you the information". We would respect him as a responsible minister if he told us that he does not feel free to speak about certain things which take place in the realm of international diplomacy. If some of us occasionally twit the minister, it is done in good humour having regard for the very high, almost Falstaffian Shakespearean comedy in which he engages.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I cannot take these compliments.

Mr. Lewis: Having watched the minister in the house I know he can take compliments, insults or almost anything with the same equanimity. No one has asked him to betray confidences. He says that if they do not state publicly what they think on every point it is not because they do not care about it.

What we have been urging, Mr. Speaker, and the position I am trying to put today as best I can, is that the world situation is so dangerous that it can be saved only by rallying world opinion, by rallying all the smaller

countries and states in the world in some united action at the United Nations and in a united demand to the United Nations. We believe that Canada is the right country to do it and that Canada will not and cannot do it if the minister refuses to state publicly what he suggests he may have stated privately.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Will my hon. friend excuse me if I leave for a few minutes?

Mr. Lewis: It is very good of the minister to ask my permission. I could not withhold it, but I appreciate his courtesy. He asked whether, if he had said publicly what he wanted to—I suppose that is what he meant—he could maintain any credibility in Washington. I say, as I and other members of my party have said before, that if the price of being listened to by Washington is acting like a dumb satellite, or if the price of being admitted into offices in Washington is to give up the right to speak with a conscience about matters which shake the world, then I am not at all sure that having access to the offices in Washington is of much value.

The following appeared in an editorial in the *Globe and Mail* of April 4 last:

If Mr. Pearson still thinks that Canada can have some influence on President Lyndon Johnson by refraining from public criticism of his policies, there is scant evidence to support him. Nor is it easy to envisage that his woolly words at Santa Barbara—both in his speech and at a press conference—are likely to persuade Mr. Johnson and his advisers that they should abandon efforts for a military victory in Viet Nam.

I believe the basis for our friendship with the United States is stronger than the government suggests it is. If it is not that strong, then I have great fear for such a friendship. A real friendship between independent nations ought to be able to last beyond the point where one of them says something in criticism of the other. This has been the case in other matters such as the question of the guide lines or some other things about which there have been differences. This has held true.

I do not for one moment accept the proposition that if this government, and through the government this entire parliament, said publicly, clearly and forthrightly, not necessarily in unkind or bitter terms, that Canada requests the United States government to stop bombing North Viet Nam and stop invading the demilitarized zone as a first step in negotiations for peace, our friendship with the United States would be hurt or that the doors to Washington offices would be closed.