

Interim Supply

I think this is a soft policy of the Canadian government that is not supported by the Canadian people.

Mr. Green: May I ask the hon. member if he does not realize that Canada did vote in favour of those paragraphs in the resolution which did not mention South Africa, but which dealt with racial discrimination.

Mr. Argue: Yes; so far as the paragraphs are concerned which do deal with racial discrimination, Canada voted. But when it came to paragraph 3, the nub of the resolution, the heart of the resolution, Canada backed away and refused to take a stand in opposition and took no stand at all so far as this particular section was concerned. As I have said, Canada abstained from voting on the resolution. My friend says that in the view of the government discrimination is only bad if it is outside the commonwealth.

If this had been a resolution directed against a non-commonwealth nation, certainly if it had been directed against an east European nation, Canada would not have hesitated to make a strong, ringing declaration. I suggest that there should not be one attitude to one group of nations on the question of racial discrimination and different attitude, no matter to what degree, to racial discrimination within the commonwealth. I am, therefore, critical of the government for not having taken a strong stand at the United Nations and for not having issued a strong diplomatic protest to the South African government at this time.

The United States government made an official statement. The Canadian government, through the Prime Minister, has been stating Canada's position in the house. But I believe that in general ours has been a position that is less frank than the Canadian people would desire. My first suggestion, therefore, as to what should be done so far as our country is concerned is as I have outlined.

Second, I would think that the Canadian people would be fully justified in doing as are many people in the United Kingdom, for example, at this time, in refusing to purchase goods on sale in their country which have been produced or manufactured in South Africa. If the goods produced in South Africa on shelves in Canadian stores were not moving at this time to the same degree they have moved in the past, I think this situation would be a clear indication to the government of South Africa that the people of Canada protest this mistaken, inhuman and unchristian attitude and policy of that government.

There is in this morning's press a report that the United States ambassador to the United Nations, namely Henry Cabot Lodge,

[Mr. Argue.]

current president of the United Nations security council, will be calling the 11 nation body together early next week to deal with the South Africa racial conflict. Third, I would hope that Canada would take a firmer position in the future within the councils of the United Nations on this question, that Canada would support and would call for a full inquiry now into the situation in South Africa by the United Nations or any agency of the United Nations, and that Canada would support a strong protest from the United Nations security council in respect of the situation in South Africa and the attitude of the South African government.

I have noted in recent days that a petition is being circulated amongst the members of the United Nations asking for a special session of the United Nations to protest any further atomic tests by the government of France and that there are almost enough signatures supporting a United Nations special assembly meeting to require that such an assembly be undertaken. I would think that a special session of the United Nations itself on this question is fully justified in the interests of humanity. In any action that can be taken by the United Nations I would hope that Canada give this action its wholehearted, full and unequivocal support.

The fourth thing I suggest is that Canada should not only welcome, as we do, the statement that Prime Minister Verwoerd of South Africa will be attending the prime ministers' conference; but we should have from the Canadian Prime Minister—our Prime Minister—a clear indication that this question of racial discrimination will be raised at the prime ministers' conference in the interests of humanity, of basic democratic fair play. I suggest also in the interests of maintaining and extending the influence of the commonwealth.

After all, Mr. Chairman, it is not the size of an association of nations, in my opinion, that is most important as far as influence is concerned. It is no longer mainly a question of the size of armaments or the type of armaments in the arsenals of any given political power that decides its influence in the world. In the main I think it is a question of the record and the attitude of the government to basic human freedoms and rights of the citizens within the nation. If the commonwealth is to be strong, we must take all possible steps to remove the cancer in the commonwealth body which is damaging to its existence and is weakening its strength.

Once again, in order to make our position completely clear, may I say that we are not asking a nation that has taken a wrong course and that today is in conflict with