

*The Address—Mr. Pearson*

article which I read not long ago we were referred to as three men in search of a cease-fire. Our search was not successful. After we had secured from the unified command in Washington a basis for stopping the fighting which we thought reasonable, we tried to enter into effective contact with the people's government at Peking. But for a long time our efforts were unavailing, and I must say we were not treated even with very great politeness.

However, on December 21, the Chinese foreign minister broadcast a reply to our approaches in which he claimed the cease-fire committee had been illegally constituted. He demanded that negotiations for a political settlement should precede rather than follow a cease-fire in Korea. Such a procedure, of course, was totally unacceptable to us, and to the United Nations. Nevertheless, in spite of this somewhat sharp rebuff it was felt by the United Nations that it might be worth while for the cease-fire committee to make another attempt to convince the regime at Peking of the genuineness of our offer, to which the United States completely subscribed, to enter into negotiations on a wide range of Far Eastern issues if a cease-fire could only be established. After considerable difficulty, we drew up a statement of principles which was presented to the political committee of the assembly on January 11. This statement combined proposals for ending the fighting in Korea with others for political negotiations of outstanding Far Eastern problems. The proposal secured the approval of fifty of the sixty member nations, including the United States and India.

A great deal of the credit for securing such widespread approval of the statement of principles must be ascribed to the fact that, at the time it was being prepared, the commonwealth prime ministers were meeting in London. This was an occasion on which the commonwealth association was extremely valuable in harmonizing the views of the free nations of the east and west. I hope I may be permitted to say, Mr. Speaker, that our own Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) played a central role in the discussions in London to reconcile the various points of view.

The first reply from Peking to our statement of principles was certainly ambiguous, though it seemed to be a rejection since it contained an apparent reaffirmation of the theory that a cease-fire must follow rather than precede negotiations. In order to try to remove what we thought might be ambiguity, and indeed turned out to be ambiguity, our Prime Minister suggested to the Prime Minister of India, in a message on January

[Mr. Pearson.]

18, that since the government of India maintained an embassy in Peking it would be helpful if clarification could be sought through Indian channels to certain points in the reply which the Chinese communists had returned to our statement of principles. It was in answer to this initiative on the part of our Prime Minister and Mr. Nehru that the Chinese government provided the clarification requested in their message of January 22. That clarification seemed more hopeful, since it stated for the first time in fairly clear language that a cease-fire could be agreed upon in the first meeting of a conference called to discuss Far Eastern issues and that this discussion of political issues would not take place until after the cease-fire had been agreed on. That reply was considerably encouraging to some of us.

During the time that these cease-fire discussions were going on, proposals to name the Chinese communists formally in the United Nations as aggressors had remained in abeyance. As soon as the first reply, that of January 17, was received from Peking, the United States, considering that reply to be wholly unsatisfactory, pressed the other members of the United Nations to proceed without delay with such condemnatory action. That presented our delegation with the fourth and final issue of critical importance about which I wish to say something, especially in view of the amendment to the address in reply submitted yesterday by the leader of the C.C.F. party. We felt at that time, as indeed the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggarr (Mr. Coldwell) said yesterday, that the passage of such a formal resolution of condemnation in the United Nations at that particular moment, when we had just received the second reply from Peking, would be both premature and unwise. If it were not followed by some action against China, it would throw into high relief the sharp limitations of United Nations' resolutions. On the other hand, if it were followed by the imposition of sanctions, however modest, against China, the risk of the west becoming involved in a war with China would be increased; and we were and are determined, along with other delegations, to do everything we can to prevent a war with China, whether limited or unlimited. We were all also loath at that moment to support a formal condemnation of China in the United Nations because we felt that the clarification which had come from Peking afforded some possibility of satisfactory negotiation with that regime. There was also a real danger at that time that a resolution of condemnation in the United Nations, in the terms of the United States' resolution as it stood at that time, would unnecessarily highlight and