

Report of Minister on Scandinavia

Mr. Stanfield: The minister had plenty of time to prepare to meet the press, but not time enough to perform his first obligation upon his return, namely to meet the House of Commons. Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I am bound to admit that the statement he made today lost nothing by being delayed.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Stanfield: I think it would be safe to say that no Canadian minister has been the object of such derision internationally since the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) came back from London.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: I do not know whether the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) is more to be pitied than laughed at or more to be laughed at than pitied. But still the comment made by Winston Churchill comes to mind, made after Wendell Wilkie returned from a world tour. Wilkie said, "Mr. Churchill"—as he then was—"I could write a book," and Churchill replied, "And the title could be Gullible's Travels."

• (2:30 p.m.)

The purpose of the minister's trip is incomprehensible. He gave no explanation before he left Canada concerning why he was going. Now that he has returned he has given a rather convoluted explanation to the house and the country. I must say I congratulate him on being able to keep a straight face during his presentation, while all those about him were having great difficulty doing so. According to the minister's statement and the news reports, the minister made a number of speeches in Copenhagen, Helsinki, Oslo, Stockholm and the Lord knows where else, on the genesis of the Prime Minister's NATO policy. It was much the same sort of doubletalk we have been hearing for several months, of keeping one foot in Europe and maintaining an effective military presence. This kind of talk has been a farce here. It is bad enough that this should take place before a Canadian audience but it is worse that the minister should make a road show of it.

Already it seems clear that the real reason the minister went to Scandinavia was to get in on what he thought was the successful conclusion of the talks between Canadian diplomats and representatives of the Peking government. The minister was going to jump on the bandwagon just as it came into public view. Before he left Canada, when he landed

in Europe, and on every occasion that presented itself he dropped hints that he would be glad to see the representative of the People's Republic of China. The minister's eagerness was equalled only by the Ambassador's indifference. If the minister met anyone at all, it was strictly Occidental.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Stanfield: I apologize to the house for using that play on words; but his apparent pursuit of the Chinese Ambassador has made this country look foolish. What it has done to the minister's reputation I am too charitable to say. He described this as the first official visit of a Canadian foreign minister to the countries of Scandinavia, yet his main reason for going seemed to concern not only different countries but a different continent.

The minister claims to have encouraged—and by one reading he claims to have conceived—a meeting between the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, and yet he urged them to discuss only the matters on which they can agree. I presume he would not want there to appear to be a difference of opinion. Despite the best efforts of the government to make Canada seem like a country of fools, we are not; we cannot accept fairy tales as an excuse for policy. The most revealing statement on the minister's visit slipped from his own tongue in an interview with Mr. Arthur Blakely, contained in Friday's *Montreal Gazette*. I quote Mr. Blakely's story:

Even so, Mr. Sharp felt that the exercise had been worth while. He had had some interesting chats with the Canadian Ambassador to Sweden, Arthur Andrew in which the latter had been in a position "to tell me face to face things he would not dare put in a cable".

If that is the case, Mr. Speaker, I trust the Ambassador spoke for all of us.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

An hon. Member: Poor Sharp, poor Sharp!

Mr. Andrew Brewin (Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, we in this party share the view expressed with such wit by the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), that it would have been much more courteous and proper for the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp) to have first made this statement in the house, before he made it in a press interview last Friday. We sympathize with the minister's difficulty in presenting Canada's NATO policy to our Scandinavian allies and friends, because he has never practised telling this house what Canada's phase by phase