

Lack of Debate on Foreign Affairs

sorts of stories and rumours about the use of poison gas and other things. I believe the Members of this House are entitled to a complete explanation as to what is happening. After all, Canada is a Pacific power. What happens in the Pacific is of great importance to this country, not only now but more particularly in the future.

Other countries in the Commonwealth have given strong support to the United States in South Viet Nam. Australia has sent troops. I understand New Zealand is considering doing the same thing. I am not suggesting, Mr. Speaker, that Canada should send troops under the circumstances which exist at the moment. I do not believe we should. However, I believe we should make very clear, indeed clearer than we have done to date, that we do firmly support the United States in her endeavours in this field.

● (4:00 p.m.)

As I mentioned, Canada is a Pacific power. I believe the present administration has, to some considerable degree, ignored Canada's position in the Pacific and her relationship to other countries in that area. It is time we had a Pacific policy—and I mean "Pacific" in terms of the Pacific Ocean. We are an important power in that area but we have never exerted our influence. Possibly we have never had an occasion to do so, but now, when there is an expansion of conflict in Southeast Asia not only in Viet Nam but elsewhere, I think we should exert greater influence in this area than we have done to date, and that we should back up the United States more firmly than we have done so far.

I know the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) has told us we do support United States policy in South Viet Nam. But unfortunately, because of a certain event in Philadelphia, press reports, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, many Americans get the impression that Canada is less than enthusiastic in its support of the United States in this regard.

An hon. Member: Hear, hear.

Mr. Nesbitt: There are probably some Members of this House who do not support the United States policy in Viet Nam, and there are people in Canada who do not support it. But I think the majority of us do.

Mr. Prittie: No.

Mr. Nesbitt: The hon. Member for Burnaby-Richmond (Mr. Prittie) disputes that assertion. Well, he and other Members of his party are entitled to hold that view. But it is my opinion that the majority of the people in Canada do

[Mr. Nesbitt.]

support United States policy in Viet Nam and I think the Prime Minister should reiterate this support in a firm and unequivocal way. Those people in the United States who live close to the Canadian border and who have the benefit of listening to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation cannot help drawing certain conclusions which I think are most unfortunate. They do not understand the niceties of the C.B.C. being a creation of Parliament and not of the Government. They think the C.B.C. is circulating Government views. We, of course, know differently. But when the C.B.C. repeatedly, day in and day out, gives nothing but one-sided views in its public affairs programs and the opinions of Mr. Minnie and like-minded people in the United States, the listening audience is apt to reach a certain conclusion.

Australia and New Zealand have indicated in a positive way their support of the United States in this area and I think it is time the Government did something in this regard to make its position clear in respect of Viet Nam, dotting the i's and crossing the t's.

I know there are some in Canada who take the view that it would be much easier if the United States got out of South Viet Nam. They have no business there, anyway, they say. But I believe it has been pointed out on numerous occasions, indeed by the Prime Minister himself, that if this policy were followed the next victim would undoubtedly be Thailand, and then perhaps Malaysia, Burma, the Philippines and so on. The type of war being carried out in South Viet Nam is the old salami game. War by infiltration is just as effective as war by direct attack, and the new Communist way of waging war is by means of infiltration, subversion and the like. We had some evidence of it in this House only today. Surely we had an opportunity to learn from the events of 1939. I can remember very well as a student at that time how a large number of university students, professors, clergymen and politicians, said we really should not do anything to prevent Hitler from marching into the Rhineland. He had taken over Austria and the Sudetenland but he really wasn't so bad; he had built good highways in Germany and if we allowed him to make one more grab he would be satisfied.

That is the way many people were thinking in 1939. Yet documents subsequently open to us have shown that had we moved in the first place, had France moved in 1936 when Hitler went into the Rhineland, the second world war would never have taken place. We seem to have short memories. I can understand