

*External Affairs*

The minister says the situation in Formosa is potentially explosive. What message did he give today? When he spoke in Toronto a few days ago he used words that indicate a changed attitude on the part of Canada. I have his speech before me. Referring to the matter of continental defence he said:

Twice in this century Canada has been involved in a major war, locked in a life and death struggle for a period of two years or more before our American neighbours came in. Today I think that the neutrality of either of us, if the other were engaged in a major war in which its very existence were at stake, would be unthinkable. That is a tremendous change, and one which must affect all our policies and relations with the United States.

Today, I suggest with respect that policy has been watered down in the face of some criticism within this country. Today it is watered down by the use of the words that if, in consequence of aggressive action on the part of any nation, a major war follows, Canada could not in these circumstances be neutral. I believe the stand he took the other day in Toronto was one that commended itself generally to the Canadian people. But today the realism of last week appears to have been dissipated in the events that have taken place since. I for one cannot understand the addition of the extra words today in determining what Canada's policy should be.

A few weeks ago there was serious disagreement between Britain and the United States—at least so the press reported—but in the intervening days of the last three or four weeks, and particularly from the time that the Prime Minister attended the conference in London, there has been a narrowing of disagreement as between the views of the British government and the views of the United States government. Sir Anthony Eden made his declaration in parliament on March 8.

He stated his belief, with all the conviction in his power, that the United States government wished to see conditions created which would put an end to active military hostilities in the area and reduce the dangers of a wider conflict.

Then he went on to say that he hoped the Chinese government would refrain from continuing its claim on the Matsus. Then the foreign secretary continued in these words:

Her Majesty's government trusted that they would continue to exercise this restraint and that they would make it apparent that, while maintaining intact in all respects their position in regard to Formosa and the Pescadores, they would not prosecute their claims by forceful means.

Finally he went on to say this:

It was equally desirable that the Chinese nationalists should also do two things: we should like to see them withdraw their armed forces from the other coastal islands; we should hope they would let it be known that they, too, while maintaining their claims, would not prosecute them by forceful means and would abstain from all offensive military action.

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

I believe that in those words Britain took almost the same position as that taken by the United States.

The other day the minister dealt at some length with Canada's position in reference to the North American continent. This matter comes up for consideration particularly at this time; for in Canada's position with regard to her two neighbours, the great antagonists in the world of ideology, no one with a sense of reality could come to any other conclusion than that in any war in which the United States finds itself, with the U.S.S.R. on one side and the U.S.A. on the other, there can be no neutrality. But my hon. friend endeavours to leave the impression that if something should spring up in consequence of the difficulties between communist China and Chiang Kai-shek, it would be a bush fire. He has but to read the words of Molotov in which he stated that the situation in Asia was of equal concern to the U.S.S.R. In that case, it is but fantasy to say that what might happen over there would not become an all-embracing conflict. If that comes, Canada's northland, which generations believed was a tundra of waste, will become the backbone of freedom's defence.

The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Howe) chose the day of the external affairs debate, no doubt advisedly by reason of that fact, to place before the house the atomic energy policy of this country. Think of the vast uranium developments in northern Saskatchewan, where a few years ago there was no mineral development. Canada is in large measure the source of the uranium indispensable for modern war. With respect to Eldorado in northern Saskatchewan, I would suggest to the government that further consideration should be given to the preservation of that great monument to national endeavour, that necessary supply dump of uranium, to use the expression in its widest sense. Consideration should be given to the danger inherent in the fact that two of the heads of the union there are indeed communists, and do not deny that they are.

Let me pass on from there, sir, to the question of continental defence. The Prime Minister made in London several speeches that have never been elucidated or unveiled in the House of Commons since his return. Apparently there was some discussion in Britain regarding the contribution that Canada might make in connection with continental defence and also regarding the setting up of a strategic reserve available for service in the danger spots of the world. The Prime Minister pointed out, as was reported by three or four of Canada's outstanding reporters in the press who were in attendance in London—