

External Affairs

what we can see taking place almost before our eyes in this house, and what can be seen in similar parliaments, I think at this time there should be an urgent appeal to wake up before it is too late and act together to save the peace for which so many men and women have died.

Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggarr): Mr. Speaker, my first word must be to say that we support the reference of these estimates, as proposed by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson), to the standing committee on external affairs. I believe that the house should be supplied with all available information that can be given to hon. members from time to time in order that we may understand, better than we have in the past, the external relations of this country and the international situation. I am glad indeed to note that there is a greater interest in external affairs in this parliament than in former parliaments. In the days before the last war we usually had a debate for half a day which was most often asked for by the former leader of the C.C.F., Mr. J. S. Woodsworth, and it usually petered out in a few hours. It is indeed good to see the house interested in this subject as evidenced by those who were here on Friday last, although I was absent myself, and again today.

I was hoping that the debate today might range over a rather wider field than the relationship between Canada and China. It has taken that course, however, and I propose to say something about the situation a little later. What I should like to say first of all is that too often in the past and even at the present time we have been inclined to discuss international affairs apart from certain economic realities. After all, I think we should have learned by this time that economic realities are responsible to a greater degree than possibly we have appreciated in the past for the political and other disturbances that arise internationally. In my remarks I do not intend to confine myself to one type of totalitarianism because in the past twenty-five years we have seen two types, that which is called soviet communism and that which is called fascism. The seeds of both have been implanted deeply in the world and are still there, and we cannot tell when fascism may appear again in opposition to communism.

For a good many years we have tried to drive home the fact that we must pay attention to the economic conditions all over the world, including those in our own country. It was out of the misery and oppression of the czarist regime that the present form

[Mr. Drew.]

of communism arose in Russia and spread across the world. It was out of the misery and poverty of the Italian people that Mussolini was able to organize the march on Rome and set up the fascist regime. It was equally out of the unemployment and misery of the German people that Hitler and his nazi party, to our sorrow, were able to rise and obtain power in that great country.

Today the threat of communism is serious because millions of people in the world are existing in the direst poverty, misery and want. In a dispatch, for example, from London, dated March 6, Lord Boyd Orr, the former director general of the United Nations food and agricultural organization—and incidentally the 1949 Nobel peace prize winner—is reported to have said:

Hunger and not politics is responsible for the spread of communism in Asia.

May I point out that we have also been saying the same thing continually over the years. I recollect that in discussing the government's white paper on the war appropriation bill in April of 1945 I said:

No financial agreement can be successful unless a solution is found for the distribution of the real wealth of the world, across the world, and for raising standards of living everywhere in the world. This world cannot remain at peace; this world cannot remain free, as we call free, if one-half of the world is underfed, underclothed, underhoused and, indeed, underprivileged in any respect.

We believe that. We have tried to bring this truth before the House of Commons and the country again and again. I believe it is because nations have failed throughout the years to meet this fundamental requirement of human existence that we are faced with the serious challenge of soviet communism all over the world today. We know that the acceptance of such communism by depressed peoples involves a surrender of something that we consider to be very precious indeed, freedom of speech, freedom of thought and freedom of worship, which are the very fundamentals of the kind of democracy in which we believe. We may discuss plans for military rearmament, and unfortunately we must; we may set aside vast appropriations for the building up of war supplies, for the making of atomic bombs and all the rest of it. But we shall not have met the challenge of totalitarian communist or fascist propaganda until we have improved the standards of life for millions of people all over the world. Under present circumstances and because of our past failures we have to play our part—and I am not complaining about it—among the democratic nations of the world in preparing to defend our free institutions and our democratic way of life if they are threatened by military aggression. But if we fail to play our part in the removal of poverty, misery and