

External Affairs

very carefully through the record in *Hansard*, and I did not make any such statement. I hope the Leader of the Opposition will be satisfied when he reads *Hansard* that this is so and, therefore, that my "decline to this new law", as he put it, has no validity.

The Leader of the Opposition spoke at some length this morning and this afternoon. He spent a great deal of time, and that is his right and privilege—we should not complain about it—in criticizing the government on the policy we have been adopting in the Middle East. He also spent a good deal of time abusing Colonel Nasser, the head of the Egyptian government. I would just say to him in this regard, Mr. Speaker, that whatever one may think of Nasser, who is the dictator of Egypt, abuse of Colonel Nasser is no substitute for wise Canadian policy; and I cannot, myself, think it adds anything to the formulation of Canadian policy.

He mentioned this morning that the Egyptian government was falling increasingly under Russian influence, or words to that effect, and that Russian help and Russian arms were pouring into that country. If that is the case, Mr. Speaker, I suggest that we would not be following the course of wisdom—and by "we" I mean the western powers generally—by attacking him in such a way as to drive him irrevocably into the arms of Russian communist imperialism.

Mr. Diefenbaker: What do you mean by "attacking"?

Mr. Pearson: I mean abusing him and driving him into a corner by condemning him for things which, perhaps, he has not done; and using language that is too extreme and abusive to suit the situation. I do not see any value in that kind of thing in diplomatic relations, no matter what one may think about the man or the government with whom one is dealing.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra made two points very clearly in criticism of the government. One was—and this also relates to what I have just been saying—that we cater to Nasser, as he puts it, too much. That seems to me, Mr. Speaker, a strange criticism in view of the knowledge I have, and which he must have, too, of the reaction of the Egyptian government and the Egyptian people to the policy we have been adopting in the United Nations. Certainly no Egyptian down there would agree that Canada has been "catering to Nasser." His other criticism was that we have been following the United States too closely.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Would the minister allow a question at this point, arising out of a press dispatch today stating that the Egyptian government having read the qualifications is

no longer too disturbed by recent statements made by the Prime Minister of Canada and the Secretary of State for External Affairs? What were those statements that proved disturbing?

Mr. Pearson: That is an easy question to deal with because, if the hon. member had had the advantage that I have had of reading the reports in Egyptian newspapers of statements that were made in this house, and of seeing the distortion of those reports that appeared in Egyptian newspapers, he would know that it is understandable that Colonel Nasser might have been even more disturbed about Canadian policy than he was at the United Nations.

As the hon. gentleman himself said this morning, the Egyptian press has been accusing our Prime Minister of being an imperialist, a warmonger, and things of that kind. Anyone reading those reports might well have a distorted view of Canadian policy, but I do not think we should distort that distortion into a charge that we are catering to Colonel Nasser.

Now, Mr. Speaker, at the end of his statement the Leader of the Opposition did mention two items of policy which the Conservative opposition put forward in respect to Middle East questions. One of these was that the right of free and innocent passage in the gulf of Aqaba and through the straits of Tiran must be assured. Well, there is no difference between us on that, and if the hon. gentleman had listened to my statement this morning he would have realized that I said exactly the same, and I have said it more than once at the United Nations Assembly.

His second item of Conservative party policy in this matter was that the United Nations should assume direct responsibility in the Gaza area to maintain that area against aggressive action by raids across the border and that kind of thing. Here again there is no difference between us. If he had read the documents and if he had read the statements that have been made by the Canadian delegates—

Mr. Diefenbaker: I have read every word, and they have been evasive on that point.

Mr. Pearson: We have said exactly that more than once at the United Nations—

Mr. Diefenbaker: No; with much equivocation.

Mr. Pearson: —and in this house; and if the hon. member reads *Hansard* tomorrow he will probably find that I said it during my statement this morning. Hence there should not be much difference between us on that point.