

External Affairs

I cannot help wondering how long it will be before those who are from Canada and other parts of the free world in that United Nations force may find themselves, because of the failure to have plans in advance, challenged by a power which up to the present time has shown no appreciation of international responsibilities.

Finally, while the minister has spoken almost with adulation of the speed with which the Suez canal has been cleared, I should like to know the degree to which Nasser has agreed to provide assured transit to all nations. Anything less than acceptance of two of these suggestions I have made will mean that the world will face a situation where dictators or those dictator-minded will believe that all that a wrongdoer has to do is to be courageous, to be arrogant, to break his word, so long as behind him stands the U.S.S.R. If that doctrine is accepted, the peroration of the minister in drawing a picture of the peace of mankind for which all of us strive will be nothing but oratorical.

Those are the questions that I place before you, Mr. Speaker, that we wish to have answered. We want peace. We realize that if war comes, as was said the other day by one of the leading officials of the atomic energy commission of the United States, from 60 million to 75 million people in the United States will be killed shortly after the outbreak of hostilities. Making due allowance in Canada for the lesser concentration of population, we as Canadians know that 1½ million Canadians will die. That is why we on this side of the house believe that anything in the nature of playing politics with the freedom of the world and the future of our country should be avoided. It is a course that we do not intend to follow with regard to external affairs.

Mr. Alistair Stewart (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, before I get into the burden of my remarks I should like to associate the C.C.F. with the statement the minister made this morning concerning Mr. E. H. Norman. An outrageous attack was made on the integrity of this Canadian civil servant. While the people of the United States may perhaps be prepared to see their own public servants defamed, we in this country are not going to tolerate these venomous and scurrilous charges against our own people, especially when they are levelled by those who are themselves illiterate. I hope that the minister will make his protest in the most vigorous way possible.

As to the debate in which we are engaged, the Leader of the Opposition has advanced two points as a policy. The first is the right of passage through the gulf of Aqaba and the

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

Suez and the other is that the United Nations must assume direct responsibility for the Gaza area. I am not quite sure why my hon. friend took over an hour and a quarter to make his speech, interesting though it was, because that is obviously the policy of the government. I see no distinction at all between the two parties in this respect.

This morning we listened with interest to what the minister said and we found ourselves in substantial agreement with regard to what he presented as a policy. However, we regard it as a minimum policy, no more and no less. Since in the past we have been in the unhappy position in which we have had the minister rising in the House of Commons and enunciating a certain doctrine and then finding later that the government had ignored it, I hope that the minister or whoever winds up this debate will give us complete assurances that the policy stated today by the minister is the policy of the government and that it will be the minimum policy continued until we have another opportunity to debate external affairs in general. We desire these assurances because we think that the country would like to have them.

It appeared to me, Mr. Speaker, that the sum and substance of the minister's statement this morning was simply this. The United States, one of two great world powers, has moved into the Middle East. It has filled a vacuum which was obviously there; and the United States must not only accept leadership in and responsibility for what happens in the Middle East but must give leadership in the United Nations.

Unfortunately, when a nation achieves the status of an important power, its policies are going to be dictated by its own circumstances. If the United States is going to fulfil its mission, which only it can fulfil, then I think that the strongest pressure has got to be brought to bear on Washington to see that those things which we hope will be done will, in fact, be achieved. If the United States fails in this great responsibility which has been partly thrust upon it and partly acquired, then without any question the United Nations will have been destroyed. But I hope the people of the United States are prepared to assume that responsibility so, for the time being at least, I am not prepared to make a funeral oration over the demise of the United Nations. Granted it is not all we would like it to be; granted, it has failed in many things where we should have liked to see it succeed. But I think it can be argued that it succeeded signally in one very significant area in the last few weeks. It succeeded when the United Kingdom, even although the United Kingdom felt its own vital interests were at