

United Nations Charter Reform

mail to almost every corner of the world. We take it for granted as well, when airlines set up schedules that move planes all over this world, that there is agreement as to the nature of landing facilities and landing procedures which are ultimately important to bring planes safely round the world day after day. International agreements, through agencies of the United Nations, have established a sensible program of international airline co-operation.

● (5.20 p.m.)

The same facts could be repeated again and again in relation to a number of spheres. The sphere that may be of most importance for the future resolution of the problem enunciated in this notice of motion concerns the degree to which business has become internationalized. Business and the expansion of trade usually precede, in most cases, the political arrangements that men devise. In my opinion, if we are looking for some sign of hope toward the regularization of a form of law and order in the international community, it may come because of the very rapid development of the multinational or international corporation, and from the fact that those who trade and manufacture see little purpose to the confinement and restrictions that national boundaries have in past times created.

It is true that we are at the 25th anniversary of the United Nations, and I will not repeat the excellent elaboration that was given by the mover of the motion on the establishment of the Charter in 1945. Now, the desire seems to be that we should attempt to set right many of the weaknesses that have become more and more apparent during the 25 year operation of the United Nations. I think, quite frankly, that we will have to look squarely at the basic problems if we are to do that.

I am in total support of the proposals that the hon. member has advanced this afternoon, and I hope they will receive full consideration in the appropriate parliamentary committee. Perhaps the fact that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Goyer) seconded the motion is an indication that this matter will be referred, at the conclusion of this afternoon's discussion, to the External Affairs Committee for much greater consideration than we are able to give it this afternoon. But my own fear, and it is an overriding fear, is that the motion does not go far enough.

[Mr. MacDonald (Egmont).]

My overriding fear is that even if it were possible for the motion to pass, and for the government to act on all points raised in the motion, and—this would be the most remarkable of all—if it were possible for all these matters to be taken up and acted upon by the 131 members of the United Nations, even then we would find that the basic problem had not yet been dealt with. I refer to the question of jurisdiction. Quite frankly, it is the question of national sovereignty.

There are certain questions that each age has as its sacred cow, and it has been my experience, particularly in the last year or so, that no sacred cow looms larger for people in this country, and in most western countries, than that of national sovereignty. It is the sacred cow which we have willingly worshipped for many years—

Mr. Bigg: For centuries.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): For centuries, as my colleague reminds me. Over the years, nations have imbued this question with an aura that has elevated it to the status of being a sacred cow. The sacred cow is now so inviolable that we willingly offer up human lives and human possessions in order to continue to pay service to it. If anyone needs the latest example of this kind of worship one has only to think of the ways in which nations willingly looked the other way when the people of Nigeria were caught up in a dreadful civil war that almost split their country asunder. These other nations, for some 30 months, could say self-righteously, "It is not our affair because we would never seek to question what goes on beyond the sovereign boundaries of another nation!" I wonder just how long we can carry on with that level of hypocrisy and human cynicism which says that our allegiance to a concept such as national sovereignty is more important than the lives of millions of people, men women and children. The young people of our society and our country no longer think that answer is good enough. They have demonstrated that by taking to the streets. I think, too, we will find that more and more people in the adult generation will say that answer is not good enough. They are asking for possible alternatives to be elaborated by our leaders and statesmen.

The alternative that has been painted until recently by a very small group of people is that we should consider some form of world federalism in which there would be a granting of powers by the nation states to a larger