

External Affairs

Mr. Pearson: Then in his final speech before the assembly on March 9, the Israeli spokesman, Mr. Eban, said this:

Our admiration goes out to the delegation of Canada for constantly focusing the attention of the General Assembly upon its affirmative and constructive tasks.

These three countries, Mr. Speaker, do not seem to have realized that they have been "knifed".

I could, of course, quote many expressions of favourable opinion, official and unofficial, from the United States, but they would be suspect in the eyes of hon. members opposite.

Our policy has, I admit, been strongly and, I think, unfairly, criticized from two quarters only: the Egyptian government of Colonel Nasser, and the Conservative party in this House of Commons.

Mr. Speaker, in closing I would just like to say that since last October we have done what we could to secure a peaceful, honourable settlement of immediate issues which would pave the way for the solution of the political problems between Israel and her neighbours—a solution which is essential if further conflict is to be avoided, and which seems so terribly difficult to achieve, unless, of course, one has no direct contact with the problems themselves. At the present moment, as I see it, the essential thing is that both Israel and Egypt should exercise restraint and moderation, and that Egypt should co-operate and not obstruct the United Nations in its efforts to secure and supervise peace and order in the Gaza strip. That is the immediate point of crisis.

Therefore, the government of Egypt is, I think, in honour bound to co-operate—

An hon. Member: Honour?

Mr. Pearson: In honour bound to co-operate with the United Nations in this task. It is to its own interest to do that. If it does not do that—

Mr. Ferguson: Do what?

Mr. Pearson: —co-operate with the United Nations in this task. That co-operation is essential because the United Nations is operating in a territory in Gaza which legally is under the administration of the government of Egypt. Try to accept that fact.

Mr. Hodgson: It did not belong to Egypt a few years ago.

Mr. Pearson: If the government of Egypt does not so co-operate, then it may prevent the United Nations not only from taking on new responsibilities for peace and security but from discharging those which the United Nations has already taken on in respect of 250,000 refugees dependent entirely on the

[Mr. Hodgson.]

United Nations and those which it has already taken on in respect of security at the demarkation line. From every point of view, therefore, the government of Egypt should in its own interest as well as in the interest of peace and security give the maximum amount of co-operation to the United Nations in this effort. If it does not do so, I repeat, its action could result in the dissolution of the United Nations emergency force entirely and even in the dissolution of the United Nations relief works agency in Gaza, and that would mean chaos. It could result in the Israeli and Egyptian armies facing each other once again in bitterness and hostility, with nothing between them.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot believe that Egypt—even Egypt, let alone any other country—desires that result. I therefore hope that those powers which have the greatest influence—and I am thinking particularly of the United States—will use that influence forcefully through diplomatic channels and any other channels which may be open to them in Cairo and wherever else is necessary, to help avoid such a disaster. So far as this government is concerned, we will continue to do our best in helping to find a peaceful and just solution for these dangerous and difficult problems.

Mr. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, many of the questions that were to be answered have remained unanswered in this speech delivered by the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Pearson). As he rose to such heights of modesty a few moments ago, I wondered what the other 79 nations at the United Nations had been doing in recent months. There he stood, the boy upon the burning deck, the world situation fraught with fear as it is. There he stood and as he spoke today I could not but think of Chanticleer. You will remember him, Mr. Speaker. He believed that it was his crow that caused the sun to rise. I have listened to my hon. friend through the years and I have regarded his opinions with that measure of responsibility which his position deserves. But in the light of subsequent events I think the remarks that he made today are ones that he will live to regret.

Mr. McIvor: No.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I would ask my hon. friends to maintain themselves in silence. We sat here in silence, and I would ask them to maintain silence unless they have questions to ask. Today Nasser once more receives from my hon. friend the accolade which was originally conferred upon him by the Prime Minister (Mr. St. Laurent) and