

Supply—External Affairs

people, but of preserving the peace in that very important and strategic area until a solution is found.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, in the few moments between now and adjournment, I want to assure that others shall have an opportunity of expressing their views, and therefore I am going to restrict myself to a few observations. I thank the minister for the outline of the views of the government based on his experience at Geneva following conversations which he has had with those whom he named. I know General Gyani very well. There is no one in the military world who, I believe, has the same capacity and ability to discharge a difficult and delicate position such as his. I saw him in operation in the Middle East command. He has not only military capacity, but above all he has that diplomatic finesse that enables him to communicate with those under his command, and also the people in the area in which the force operates.

I need not say, however, and I am sure the minister will not take this as criticism, that while the outline he gave was eloquent and couched in grandiloquent language, the information which he provided did not equal the diction which he used. He has told us nothing about the directives. I realize that it would have been within his discretion—

Mr. Martin (Essex East): There is no discretion on my part. If I were to give those directives I would be violating the request of the United Nations itself, as well as the agreement amongst the participating countries. I am sure my hon. friend, who had important experience with the Congo, will understand why I am saying this.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I cannot argue with that. When the minister says he has been advised not to give any information in this connection, I would be the last to ask him to depart from that admonition he has received. But it does impress me as being extraordinarily strange that Canada, contributing an 1,100 man force out of 7,000, should not have available to her people the basis, the general basis rather than the particular directives, on which the force will operate.

What is to be its role? In general, it is to be a peace keeping role. However, we do not know the circumstances under which it is to be discharged. Questions have been asked as to whether there would be power in the force to disarm guerrilla bands and the like. We have no information in that connection. It is not for me to conclude that the view held in some quarters is actually the correct one.

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

But generally speaking, the criticism that has been made of the force is this: It is a powerless force. I should like the minister to outline in general terms, keeping strictly within the circumference of the areas upon which he can give precise information, what is the authority of this force? We know what its purposes are. We know its objective is to maintain the peace until a permanent settlement can be secured. But surely Canada, making a contribution not only of manpower but also a large monetary contribution to the United Nations force, should be entitled to more information than the minister provided today.

Reading the editorials across the country, there is a feeling among the Canadian people as a whole, that Canada is entitled to more information than has been given as yet. I am not going to say any more in that connection. The minister, in general terms has spoken of the hope that the force will achieve peace, and that the United Nations will have available at all times a force to be used when the circumstances demand international action for peace. We believe that, and the minister was fair enough in his remarks to refer to the government of which I had the honour to be the head. We made available this force, the Royal 22nd, as the force which could be used at any time Canada decided a United Nations force should be dispatched. We believed that was necessary. This force, therefore, was available when difficulties arose in Cyprus which demanded that a force be sent there. Inasmuch as Canada took the lead in providing a trained force for the purpose of assuring mankind that Canada would play her part in peace keeping operations at any time under the United Nations, surely we are entitled to more information than we have had today.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Will my right hon. friend permit me to interrupt. I know he does not want to give a wrong impression. Will he not agree that when the Congo force was established and when the government of which he was a member agreed to participate, the same position was taken by the government of that day as I have taken today? In the light of events at that time, it was the correct position, I am sure. There was no revelation of the directives to the force then. I say to the right hon. gentleman that we are not taking this course because we do not want to give information. If we were to give this information, we would not be contributing to the reason for which the force was established which was to try to bring about an accommodation and preserve the peace in the very difficult situation that exists.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, I do not accept the analogy at all. The Congo situation was quite different. I am speaking now from