

The Address—Mr. Brewin

In my view, certain facts should be taken into account, not just in the interests of the world, but in the interests of the United States itself. First, the United States is getting involved in a land war in Asia against which she has been warned time and again by her most distinguished military leaders. Second, any resumption of the bombing will likely lead to renewed dangers of escalation of the war with incalculable consequences. Third, the bombing of an Asian peasant nation by the forces of the greatest and most powerful nation of the western world can only lead to the creation of hatred of the white race in many other parts of the world. Fourth, all other constructive developments in international affairs are being held up while the war proceeds.

The United States is in danger of drifting, as Walter Lippmann has said, into an icy isolation. It is claimed, indeed, that the United States is strong enough and prosperous enough to provide guns and butter, and to devote additional millions to the war and, at the same time, to proceed with the building of a great society. Again, as Walter Lippmann has pointed out, the internal movement of reform and development is psychologically inconsistent with the increased involvement with war.

Even if it is not possible now or in the near future to arrive at a negotiated truce, we urge that there ought to be no further escalation of the war and no resumption of the bombing. Indeed, the suggestion by Mr. George Kennan may have great validity when he said:

Immediate negotiations may be fruitless but a steady de-escalation of the conflict might enable successful negotiations to emerge at a later date.

In this crisis of human history it is to be hoped that Canada's full weight and influence will be used to urge that this course be pursued, rather than the tragically dangerous course of renewing the deadly process of escalating the war.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a word or two about the amendment moved by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) upon which we will be voting tomorrow. As has been made very clear by my leader, the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam (Mr. Douglas), we in this party will support the amendment. We will do so because we believe that Canada can afford and should afford to relieve the old age pensioners by increasing the basic pension to \$100 a month, as proposed in the amendment.

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May I emphasize once again that in so doing we are not asking the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson), if he should be defeated on this motion, to call another election. We do not believe that common sense or constitutional requirement would justify him in so doing.

It is not true in our view that there is no other alternative. The Prime Minister would have available the course proposed by the right hon. Leader of the Opposition, namely to advise that the Leader of the Opposition be called upon to form a government. I am not sure I would recommend this course, Mr. Speaker because, to put it as mildly and as politely as I can, I am not sure the Leader of the Opposition would obtain and retain the continuing support of the various other parties in opposition.

There is another alternative which has been clearly pointed out by my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), with a wealth of precedents. That is, that the Prime Minister could treat the vote in favour of the amendment as an expressed view of parliament, and adopt it, undertaking to bring in the necessary legislation to give it effect or, alternatively, say that in the government's view such legislation could not be brought in but that he would submit to the house a further vote of confidence in which the issue of an election or not an election would be the real issue before the house.

If the Prime Minister was defeated on the last suggested motion, then those who voted for it would be responsible for an election that ensued—an unwanted election, as I see it. If on the other hand the Prime Minister, upon defeat on the amendment now before the house, and without availing himself of this procedure called for an election, his would be the sole responsibility for that election.

This point does not appear to have been made clear to the pundits of the press, if I may use an alliterative expression. Let me try to make it clear to the house. In voting for the amendment we will not be voting for an election. We will be voting to express our conviction on the subject of old age pensions. We do not propose to be bluffed into formally denying our convictions by any conventional myths that may be spread around. If the government is defeated on this motion and if it calls an election, the responsibility for that election must be that of the Prime Minister and of the Prime Minister alone.