

Supply—External Affairs

External Affairs and the Minister of Justice—in a way that would have warmed their hearts. He the warrior, dreamer, idealist and statesman is now retired and belongs to that exclusive club of ex-prime ministers.

I again saw something of the awful refugee problem, and I spoke with all these leaders. Mr. Chairman, 10 years ago I would not have made the suggestion I am now about to make, and I make it because I have met with the leaders of both these countries. While the Arab world has always strongly held the view that Israel should never have been created as a state, while they contend that the Balfour declaration of 1917 was one that ought not to have been made, and while they have refused at all times to meet with representatives of the Israeli government, I think there is a change of attitude in both these countries, and a recognition of the fact that Israel is there to stay and wants to live in peace with its neighbours.

Without peace Israel cannot achieve the greatness of her destiny. I have already spoken of the international force, UNEF, I decry no one else's contribution to the setting up of that force, but I do point out that in January 1956 I suggested an international force be set up to protect and ensure the boundaries between Israel and her neighbours. It was not regarded as a serious suggestion, but it was adopted later that year.

That force is not strong enough to maintain the peace. It is not intended to do that. It is there for the purpose of observation, with a minimum of security assured. The difficulty between Israel and the Arab states is one of the potential dangers in the world today, and I think if it were possible to get representatives of the U.A.R. and other Arab states to meet with representatives of Israel in discussion, there might well be a possibility of achieving a degree of agreement which has been wanting since 1948. The boundary and refugee problems may be nearer solution than could have been hoped for even two years ago, and it should not be forgotten that Canada has a high reputation in these countries.

In his speech last January the Secretary of State for External Affairs said we should look at the radar screen, as it were, of world affairs and determine on some definite courses to be taken by Canada. I am now following that suggestion. Canada, without ulterior or selfish purpose, is not suspect by either side, and it must be remembered there can never be a solution of any problem if those who disagree cannot come together. But 18 feet of carpet between opposition and government does not constitute isolation one from the other. No government is unaffected by the arguments advanced

by the opposition. No opposition is unaffected by the stands taken by the government, no matter how in the course of discussion we may disagree with them.

In Canada, Jews and Arabs live in amity, and I suggest that Canada should now take preliminary steps to sound out the Arab nations and Israel, with a view to bringing together representatives of these nations in Canada to discuss their problems and difficulties, so that peace with understanding and justice may be brought to the Middle East. I think that action at this time would prove of beneficial result, and there can be no harm done if there is failure the first time in endeavours made in that direction.

I now pass on to the commonwealth, one of the unique institutions to which we belong. I felt the minister treated it very lightly with two or three sentences, and then went on to other matters. I am not going to discuss the commonwealth this evening, except to say that so long as Canada remains within the commonwealth, so long as there is that binding union, that magnetic influence east and west and over all the world, so long as that continues then we in Canada are assured of maintaining our independent existence.

From time to time I hear people speaking about what the results would be if we were to join the United States. I simply point out that all the guaranteed rights of biculturalism, education, and so on, would no longer exist; and they only exist because of the action of an imperial parliament far removed from this country which passed legislation generations ago.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Many who come to our country have no concept of what this means in their first years in Canada. They have said of the commonwealth, "What is it? It has no seal; it is not held together by the sword; it has a few preferential trade rights; in general it has a common parliamentary tradition"—and that is disappearing—"but what is there?" It is undefinable; I have never been able to understand its meaning. I have sat in a prime ministers' conference, with the prime minister of the United Kingdom as the chairman and the rest of us around a table, of different colours, of different races, of almost all the religions of men. We are able to agree on the larger things that affect mankind. While there are disagreements between countries like India and Pakistan, no one in the commonwealth family believes the day will ever come when there will be war between them. In other words, the commonwealth knows what peace means, and the commonwealth knows how to