

Supply—External Affairs

policy which could not have been more mishandled.

• (5:30 p.m.)

Never mind about drawing battle lines around an area and saying "we must stop them here", because they will seep through. What we are doing is to weaken the hand of every would-be reformer in every country whose only chance for survival in a democratic way is through reform. We are pointing out that the democratic western world will not support reform and therefore these countries must resort to communist violence in order to bring about any change. How can anyone stand up here and tell me that this is the only way in which communism can be contained when for years the very seed of communism has been nurtured by our refusal to recognize that communism can best feed on the faults and weaknesses in our system? We do not need any special armour against the communists. Our best armour is built into our democratic system which allows self-criticism and encourages a critical analysis of what we are doing with relation to the needs of our people. We must practise it.

I must apologize to the committee for repeating myself but I do wish to say again, and I get a little more annoyed about it every day, that the greatest friends the communists have are people like the hon. member for Leeds. What helps them most is the kind of nonsense he was spouting in this chamber a little while ago when he pointed out the faults of the communists and then said, "here is your alternative: the stupidity we are practising or the worse stupidity of the communists". Why in heaven's name is there no other alternative? Have we never heard of reform under a system which is neither communist nor democratic? Where do we get the stupid idea that our choice is only between communism or democracy? Where did this idiocy arise? It could only be propagated by people who find any consistency between the United States position in Viet Nam now and the democratic process. The position is: you can only be red or dead, as though there were no other choice. Either the Americans are right or the communists are right, as though there were no other option.

Arguments such as these will destroy us unless we are willing to look critically at what we are doing and speak frankly to our friends and neighbours. Otherwise we will lose the struggle when the cards are all on our side. Why spend our time talking about

what terrible fellows the communists are? We do not need to be convinced. We just need to be protected now and then and our allies need a little help, which we are not giving them by telling them how bad the communists are and then adopting communist methods ourselves. What we need is a more critical analysis of what we are doing and a greater realization of the need for some essential reforms to protect our friends from communism.

We must have more respect for the right to self-determination of even small countries, regardless of whether or not we like the way in which they choose their government and the way in which they run their country. I hope we will speak frankly to our neighbour, friend and ally, the United States, and ask them in the name of democracy to take another look at the situation and to withdraw from Viet Nam.

Mr. Prittie: Mr. Chairman, it is not my intention to speak about Viet Nam, although I do wish to make one comment on this subject. I believe the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona said that the way things have developed Viet Nam will probably end up with some kind of communist government. When I was home in my constituency last week end I was shown a letter from a Canadian in Viet Nam. I do not have the letter with me nor do I have the freedom to quote from it at this moment, but let me say that he described conditions in that country and made some devastating comments about the South Vietnamese officials and the conduct of the war by the Americans. The only people for whom he had any praise were the South Vietnamese, many of whom have somehow, through all their terrible suffering, remained cheerful. While I was listening to the remarks of the hon. member for Edmonton-Strathcona I could not help but think that these people would probably be better off under any other type of administration than the one they have at present. If I can get permission to quote that letter I would like to read it in the house some day.

The minister will not be surprised at the topic I am going to bring up because I have brought it up many times before. It has to do with one particular aspect of external aid. In the past I have urged him that some attention be given to the question of the population problem and that family planning should be part of our external aid program. As I have said in the past, I never try to oversimplify