

to Asia and the Middle East so that Canadians and freedom-loving nations will know where Canada stands.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

• (4:00 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I believe I should bring to the attention of hon. members that it has been the practice in the past in such debates to recognize, after the Leader of the Opposition, representatives of the other parties to the left of the Chair. In view of the special circumstances of this debate, if the hon. member for York South wishes to allow the Secretary of State for External Affairs to make a reply immediately I would recognize him. I must say, however, that normally under the practice which has been established for some years now the hon. member for York South would normally be allowed to speak at this time.

Mr. Lewis: Mr. Speaker, in view of the world situations we are discussing it seems obvious to me that the minister responsible for our foreign policy ought to have the earliest opportunity to speak. I am delighted to agree to your suggestion.

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak at this particular point in the debate I am moved to do so for the reasons stated by my hon. friend. I thank him very much for recognizing that in view of the importance of the discussion it is desirable that I should intervene at this time.

My right hon. friend has presented an amendment in which he criticizes the government on a number of counts and thereby by implication asserts that he has no confidence in the government of Canada for the reasons stated in the amendment.

Mr. Mandziuk: Find out who has.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I shall be glad at once to deal with what I believe to be the invalid grounds on which he has predicated his amendment. I do not propose to deal with every question he has raised in the amendment nor do I propose to deal with his speech in the same terms he has used. I shall endeavour, however, to deal with the situation confronting the world at the present time, the seriousness of which I think warrants as objective a discussion as those of us on all sides of this house are capable of giving to it. My hon. friend asks, what is the policy of the government on Viet Nam, what is the policy

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of the government with regard to the situation in the Middle East, and what is the policy of the government on this and on that. My hon. friend has a right to put these questions just as the country has a right to learn from the government its position.

Having examined the debates in the British house, in the chamber of deputies in France, in some of the Scandinavian deliberative assemblies and in Australia and New Zealand, I should like to say, with regard to the question of Viet Nam, that I challenge any hon. gentleman to indicate that in these places there has been more debate or more thorough debate either in the house or in a committee of that house. In discussing a matter of this great importance it would be well for us to bear in mind that other countries in the western world, concerned as they are about the world situation in Viet Nam, have had the same kind of indictments made against them that understandably are made against this government in respect of a worrying and difficult situation.

The Prime Minister of Great Britain—the leader of the Labour government—when requested in the House of Commons in Britain to disclose the nature of the discussions he had had with Mr. Kosygin said that he and the premier of the Soviet union devoted the major part of their discussions to Viet Nam. He said that these discussions were urgent and constructive. He also said they were confidential.

Mr. Diefenbaker: On what date and on what page does this appear?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): It appears at pages 346 and 347 of the British parliamentary debates for February 14 this year. He said:

They were also confidential and must remain so, as must equally my contacts with the President of the United States.

Then he went on to say:

These disappointments should not drive any of us into panic measures, reversals of policy or into the delusion that peace can be secured by dramatic but ineffectual declarations. Those of us who have a role to play in this matter have a duty to keep cool and to keep our eyes fixed on the goal we set ourselves last week, to use the influence we possess to prevent the bitterness as well as the fighting from escalating, and to begin again, however difficult the circumstances, to create two-way confidence—and to remember above all that our objective is not to strike allegedly moral postures or to make unhelpful denunciatory declarations—our objective is to secure peace.