

*External Affairs*

**Mr. Ferguson:** Does the minister agree with the attitude of Australia and New Zealand on the subject, or does he disagree?

**Mr. Pearson:** I am dealing at the moment with the Canadian attitude. I will come to the attitude of the other governments in a few moments.

**Mr. Speaker:** Order.

**Mr. Pearson:** Mr. Speaker, the version of this matter given by the hon. member for Digby-Annapolis-Kings (Mr. Nowlan)—and I am quoting from his broadcast—was that we had seriously damaged our commonwealth of nations. Well, Mr. Speaker, the house knows what happened, and I will not repeat the details because they have been given in the house. The United Kingdom took certain military action which seemed completely justified to it, and which we have not condemned but which we have regretted—certain military action which came as a complete surprise, and which was taken without any advance notice to other members of the commonwealth or to the United States.

And now I am dealing with the division of the commonwealth, and the accusation that we seriously damaged the commonwealth by bringing about this division. Three Asian members of the commonwealth strongly opposed this action from the beginning, and therefore the commonwealth was, in truth, seriously split and damaged. There is no doubt about that. This is a fact, incidentally, which would have made it somewhat of a feat for the Canadian government to support the commonwealth on this issue, as we have been criticized for not doing, except on the assumption, which we, at least, will not make, that four-fifths of its population should be excluded.

**Mr. Green:** You could have waited.

**Mr. Pearson:** The division of the commonwealth on this issue is shown by the voting on the basic resolution of November 2 which urged a cease fire in the Suez. Three of the 64 members supporting that resolution were from the commonwealth; three of the six members opposing that resolution were from the commonwealth, and two of those abstaining were from the commonwealth. We were split all right, Mr. Speaker.

And what did Canada try to do?

**An hon. Member:** Nothing.

**Mr. Pearson:** We tried to bring the commonwealth together, and played our part in preserving peace by initiating a proposal for United Nations action on which all members of the commonwealth and of the western coalition could agree, and did agree; and in doing so to prevent a widening and deepening

of the breach between the members of those two groups on whose unity and strength today peace so largely depends.

To the Conservative party, however, this is taken as seriously damaging the commonwealth. They opposed this policy of ours at the United Nations last autumn, and we accept their opposition as an important division between the two parties on this point.

**Mr. Fleming:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Pearson:** But before I conclude, let us see how our policy is regarded in other countries. In the United Kingdom it has been warmly praised by such organs of opinion—and none of these reflect the views of the Labour Party, whose position on this matter is well known—it has been warmly praised in the *Manchester Guardian*, the *London Times*, the *Spectator*, and the *Economist*, to mention only a few.

As recently as yesterday, the *Daily Telegraph*, a newspaper which strongly supported the United Kingdom government's intervention last October, had this to say editorially, and I quote:

No country has grown in international stature so swiftly and markedly as Canada has done during the Middle East crisis. Her role in the United Nations has been of dual importance. At the outset, she assumed there a commonwealth leadership that Britain, as a party "in the dock", was temporarily debarred from exercising. In the subsequent shaping of United Nations policy, Canada tried to temper with realism the legalism into which the assembly was forced by Afro-Asian rigidity and United States timidity. Hers has often been a lonely voice of reason, crying in a wilderness of fantasy, "expectations" and "assumptions".

That, Mr. Speaker, is from the *London Daily Telegraph*.

**An hon. Member:** A leading Tory paper.

**Mr. Hodgson:** You certainly have been a voice crying in the wilderness.

**Mr. Pearson:** We shall hear your voice later. As for the suggestion that we "knifed France in the back", this is what the Prime Minister of France, Mr. Mollet, had to say here in the House of Commons a week ago last Monday, and I quote his words:

Whatever may have been our disagreements at one moment, I must underline the positive character and extreme usefulness of the initiatives taken by the Canadian government, how its interventions, always animated by the most friendly spirit, have often been decisive.

And then, Mr. Speaker,—

**Mr. Hodgson:** Why don't you explain the "superman" speech?