

Human Rights

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1602)

Mr. Diefenbaker: I suggest that the Government of Canada take a stand. In the last few days the Prime Minister has been taking stands both in Washington and in New York which have been so uncertain that nobody can possibly conclude what Canada stands for. Indeed, some of the observations indicate that he rather supports the attitude of the U.S.S.R. with respect to NATO.

Where are we going? I brought a question before parliament just before Helsinki. I will not read it in detail. I asked the question on July 24, 1975. I said:

Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister. Next week there will be a meeting of 35 nations in Helsinki. We in this House have no idea whatsoever as to the stand that the Prime Minister will take on behalf of Canada, there having been no day set aside for the purpose of discussion and ascertaining the feelings of members of this House with regard to the tremendous problems affecting the peace of not only Europe, but of the world, which will come up. I therefore ask him whether he has received representations from organizations such as the Ukrainian Canadian Committee—

That committee is dedicated to freedom, stands for freedom, and maintains courage at all times in that connection.

I specifically ask the Prime Minister . . . whether any treaty signed by Canada should include a definite commitment by all signatories, including the U.S.S.R., to implement within their jurisdictions the principles embodied in the universal declaration of human rights and, second, that in the establishment of boundaries in eastern Europe which are the result of conquest, that such establishment should be conditional on the principle of self-determination being accepted by the U.S.S.R. and the other nations. I ask what stand Canada is going to take on this matter. I speak on behalf of representations made to me for hundreds of thousands of Canadians of Ukrainian origin and also Latvian, Estonian and Lithuanian origin. They are very concerned—

They wanted to know what was going to take place. That is a summary of what I asked. The Prime Minister answered, with the usual clarity which characterizes him when he endeavours to conceal completely what this House wants to know. He said:

Mr. Speaker, as to the matter of representations, I do not believe I have received any specific representations about this conference I am attending next week. Of course, I have heard from Canadian groups of various origins about the subject many times. I have always responded to them and given them my views on it. They are well known.

All he meant by that is that they were well known to him and no one else.

MR. DIEFENBAKER: What are they?

MR. TRUDEAU: As to the conference itself, it has been in preparation for about two years. It has been discussed many times. I have answered many questions and I have had a press conference on it.

MR. DIEFENBAKER: We are talking about parliament, not press conferences.

MR. TRUDEAU: Parliament never deigned to ask me any questions on this.

MR. STANFIELD: I deigned to ask you a question.

MR. TRUDEAU: Every time I have been asked questions on foreign affairs, I have attempted to deal with them as best I could. I have no recollection of having been asked specific details about this particular conference. However, I have said in various places that Canada's role in this conference has been a very constructive one indeed.

Constructive in what regard? Silence? The Prime Minister went on:

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

We are the ones who insisted on doing the most on what is known as the third basket, the principle of free movement of people's ideas and exchange of information . . . It is not a negotiating conference. There has been agreement reached by the various governments on the document which will be proposed in Helsinki next week. I will, of course, be pleased to table that document in the House when I return.

I then said that that was not what we wanted to know. We wanted to know what the Prime Minister was going to say. Hon. members all know what the answer was, about 200 words of complete innuendo, ambiguity or nonsense.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order please. Perhaps the right hon. member will allow me to inform him that his time has expired. However, with the unanimous consent of the House he could continue. Is there consent to allow the right hon. member to complete his remarks?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There does not seem to be unanimous consent.

An hon. Member: Who said no?

Mr. Clark: The hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia) said no.

An hon. Member: So did MacFarlane.

Mr. MacFarlane: You asked us to put him on in that position. We did not think he would exceed his time.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, there is complete agreement, because hon. members opposite would not say no at this time.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. I hope hon members do not expect the Chair to put the question three times. I can ask it once more, but I think that will be the last time. Is there unanimous consent to allow the right hon. member to complete his remarks?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: There is not unanimous consent.

Mr. Paproski: Charlie Caccia, Davenport. Caccia said no.

Hon. Norman A. Cafik (Minister of State (Multiculturalism)): Mr. Speaker, I noted that in his remarks the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Clark) attacked this government on a number of accounts in connection with human rights, and I would like to spend a few moments, before going into the body of my remarks, talking about that. We are accused of not really taking a lead role regarding human rights. I was present at Belgrade on behalf of the Government of Canada.

Mr. Diefenbaker: And said nothing.