

The Address—Mr. St. Laurent

should be accorded to it. Of course, that does not mean that I am not going to have anything to say about what the leader of the opposition, in the course of this debate, has taken so long to say. But before coming to that, I believe I would be sticking rather more closely to the traditions of the house if I were to deal with some of the matters dealt with in the speech from the throne.

Before doing that, however, I want to say to the leader of the opposition that there are many of the things he said in his speech concerning dominion-provincial relations, and concerning the constitution of Canada, and its principles, with which I am in entire agreement. And if there was any hope anywhere that an issue could be created upon that, then I am sorry that we shall have to disappoint those who may have entertained such hopes.

The speech which His Excellency has addressed to the houses of parliament states that the first concern of government in world affairs is to ensure peace and security. The leader of the opposition has agreed that that should be the first concern of government. But it is rather surprising that he found it sufficient to devote but one or two short phrases to that aspect of the great problem of peace in the world and security for Canada. At other times and places he has stated the position of his party, and I assume that he did not consider it necessary to enlarge upon it in the course of his address on this occasion. I find reported in the *Winnipeg Free Press* of January 12 that he had stated the night before in Winnipeg, with regard to the North Atlantic defence pact, that his party was on record as favouring an association of western powers for the preservation of peace.

That is quite true, because I referred back to the resolutions adopted at the convention where the hon. gentleman was chosen leader of his party. I found this resolution:

Western defensive union. In the present crisis Canada should give its strongest support to the concept of the establishment of a western defensive union of nations.

I took the trouble to look up those resolutions because it was not so very long ago that the leader of the Conservative party in the province of Quebec made statements that were quite the opposite of this resolution. *Le Devoir* of November 13, 1948, had very substantial headlines reading:

"M. St-Laurent n'a pas le droit d'engager le pays à l'avance."

That translates:

Mr. St. Laurent has no right to commit the country in advance.

The report then goes on to state:

Au cours d'une conférence de presse, hier après-midi, dans les bureaux du quartier général [Mr. St. Laurent.]

du parti progressiste-conservateur, le leader provincial de ce parti, Me Yvan Sabourin, C.R., a qualifié de malheureuses les récentes déclarations de M. Louis St-Laurent, futur premier ministre du Canada, au sujet de "l'impossible neutralité" de notre pays, advenant une troisième guerre mondiale.

A free translation of that would be:

In the course of a press conference yesterday afternoon in the offices of the general headquarters of the Progressive Conservative party the provincial leader of that party, Mr. Ivan Sabourin, K.C., described as unfortunate the recent declarations of Mr. Louis St. Laurent, the future Prime Minister of Canada, concerning the impossibility of maintaining the neutrality of our country in the event of a third world war.

The press conference reporter then went on to state:

M. Sabourin a soutenu que le Canada peut fort bien rester neutre advenant un conflit armé entre la Russie et les États-Unis; il a cité l'exemple des États-Unis qui sont demeurés neutres pendant une période assez prolongée, lors des deux dernières guerres mondiales.

Then the reporter quotes:

"Il est fort possible", a-t-il ajouté, "que si la guerre éclatait entre la Russie et les États-Unis, le Canada puisse demeurer neutre, et suivre ainsi ses meilleurs intérêts. Si les États-Unis ont pu demeurer neutres, lors des dernières guerres mondiales, pourquoi le Canada ne le pourrait-il pas au cas d'une troisième guerre? Il n'y a qu'à renverser les rôles", a dit M. Sabourin.

Perhaps I may translate that as follows:

Mr. Sabourin contended that Canada might very well remain neutral in the case of armed conflict between Russia and the United States. He cited the example of the United States, which had remained neutral for quite a long period at the time of the two last world wars.

"It is quite possible," he added, "that if war broke out between Russia and the United States Canada might remain neutral and thus best serve its interests. If the United States were able to remain neutral at the time of the last two world wars, why could not Canada do the same in the next, third, world war? It would only be required to reverse the roles."

We are naturally concerned to know the real attitude of the Progressive Conservative party in that regard. I hope that when I read the two short phrases of the leader of the opposition about this great question of the peace of the world and the security of Canada I shall find some enlightenment there. I hope that they are clear enough to let the people of Nicolet-Yamaska know before February 7 where that party stands. There is to be a by-election in that constituency and according to reports in the same paper, *Le Devoir*, there is a gentleman there who has been nominated as the Progressive Conservative candidate.

Mr. Graydon: Is this all on the speech from the throne?

Mr. St. Laurent: It all has to do with the attitude to be taken by the Canadian people