

*Supply—External Affairs*

with Bao Dai, Emperor of Annam, and appointed him chief of Viet Nam within the French union. Similar agreements were made by France with the kingdoms of Laos and Cambodia, the two other states of Indo-China. This gave communist leadership the opportunity to further the communist conspiracy, to use the minister's own words. Then of course war began in earnest. The French used United States equipment which had been given to them to prosecute the war, and Ho Chi Minh and his associates, in what they termed their struggle against colonialism, received supplies from the new government of China, a government which simply continued the recognition of this new republic which had been accorded by the former government of Chiang Kai-shek.

I think it is with this background that our appraisal of the situation in Indo-China at the present time must be made. The struggle, as we all know, gradually assumed the more ominous aspects that have culminated in the events of the past few months, events with which we are more or less familiar from the public press. The French government has poured armies, effort and money into the war. French public opinion has been disturbed and divided and is still disturbed and divided. Daniel Mayer, as spokesman of the French socialist party, the largest party in the French chamber of deputies, referred to the background of the struggle on March 5 when speaking in the chamber of deputies, and stated that the agreements between France and Indo-China were not "mere governmental agreements but agreements which bind both peoples." He went on to say that they tie French policy with regard to all Vietnamese governments whatever their character. He referred to a statement by his late leader, Leon Blum, in 1950 when he referred to the agreement in these words:

They are in reality concluded between the French and the Vietnamese people and proclaim and sanction, unconditionally and absolutely, the independence of Viet Nam within the French union.

M. Mayer then went on to state the problem as he saw it. In the French chamber of deputies he said:

The problem which faces us today is not so much that of giving more power to the present Vietnamese government. It is rather that of determining whom that government really represents. A Syngman Rhee and a Chiang Kai-shek are sufficient handicaps to the reasonable policy which the west should adopt in Asia. Britain, a nation of traders and sailors, had the wisdom to give India her independence—one of the finest actions promoted by the Attlee government. If only we had followed its example then, we should not need to debate the war in Indo-China here today—there would have been peace long ago. On the 17th of January, 1949, when we socialists were in the government, the general secretary of our party wrote to the president of the council reminding him that

[Mr. Coldwell.]

the socialists had warned every successive government against a policy of force and against negotiating peace through men like Bao Dai and General Xuan—already then these policies had suffered shipwreck.

He went on to say:

Today a lead has come from the most remarkable statesman of the young Indian nation, who has set an example of greatness and given us an opportunity to respond in the same spirit. France must seize every opportunity which offers itself for peace. Only thus will she remain loyal to her world mission and respond to the voices which are calling from the very depths of the French people.

I might add once more that this was said in the French chamber of deputies as recently as March 5 of this year. Since these words were spoken the Berlin conference has of course been held and at the present time, as outlined by the minister this afternoon, the representatives of the nations directly involved, together with the United Kingdom, the United States and the Soviet union, are meeting in Geneva. As the minister said, what the outcome will be is still very doubtful. But in my opinion the climate of this conference has been bad from the beginning.

As Mr. Nehru pointed out in his speech of April 24, great concern has been felt because of statements which have been made since the Geneva conference was called, of the possibility of attacks on the Asian mainland and massive retaliation and the use of atomic weapons, by leading members of the United States congress and some of the military personnel of our great neighbour. Proposals for a collective pact for united action in southeast Asia, without the proviso that the hon. member for Prince Albert made this afternoon, without the adherence of the Asian nations, have caused general alarm in Asia and, I may say, in other parts of the world.

It is certain, as Mr. Nehru stated, that the implications of these statements promote fear that the newly-won independence of the Asian countries may be jeopardized. If I may quote Mr. Nehru, he said:

The maintenance of independence and sovereignty of the Asian countries as well as the end of colonial and foreign rule is essential to the prosperity of Asian peoples as well as for the peace of the world.

That is the considered opinion of the leader of the great Indian associate in our commonwealth of nations. I say that we in the commonwealth of nations have every reason to consider carefully the opinions of our largest and most populated sister nation in the commonwealth. Proposals for a south-east Asian pact should not be considered without first obtaining the co-operation and agreement of India, Burma, Pakistan and Ceylon. For the western powers to enter