

External Affairs

from the reason which the minister gave for not recognizing red China, there was no forthright declaration of policy. We listened to a very careful survey of the situation throughout the world, but nowhere did he stop and in any sense emphasize the trouble spots in the world and what our foreign policy was in relation to those trouble spots.

He did mention some of them, but he persistently refused to state what the government's proposals on disarmament are. This fact has been mentioned already by the hon. member for Assiniboia (Mr. Argue) and the hon. member for Richelieu-Vercheres (Mr. Cardin). I, like the other members, wondered why it was that he so persistently refused to mention what the proposals are for the disarmament meeting which is to take place shortly. He did say very clearly and very categorically that they will be presented to the conference for the first time.

In this stand he was supported by the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Smith), who visualized the situation as a kind of poker game. The hon. member said, why should we show our hand? It may have been quite right and quite proper for the minister to have taken the position that he would not disclose in advance to the house what the proposals of Canada will be to the disarmament conference. It may be quite right, too, for the hon. member for Calgary South to follow the minister's lead. Perhaps it is wiser for us not to show our hand. As a matter of policy, this may be so.

However, if that were so, and if that were the government's position that we should not show our hand before the conference, how shocking, how astonishing it was to see the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) stand up and give to the house the 10 points—

Mr. Graffey: Those were general principles, and you know it.

Mr. Crestohl: I beg your pardon, but I should like to ask—

Mr. Graffey: Just a straw man, and you are going to thresh it around.

Mr. Crestohl: I can assure the hon. member that I can understand general principles as well as he, and perhaps a little better. We will ask the minister, when he speaks, to tell us whether these were only general principles. If that is what they were, will the minister tell the house whether these were the principles, in the form in which the Prime Minister gave them, that were given to his colleagues who are now meeting in Washington. I should like the minister to tell us whether these are the 10 points that were given to his colleagues now meeting in Washington.

[Mr. Crestohl.]

I may say it was shocking to me to hear the Prime Minister give these points to the house. I believe somebody mentioned to the Secretary of State for External Affairs that it was humiliating to him, but the minister said he was not humiliated. What else could he have said? I assure you, Mr. Speaker, I would not want to be in the place of a minister who says I cannot tell parliament anything and then have my prime minister stand up and tell parliament those things which I was told I could not say and did not say. It is a rather disturbing thing. I was wondering why the Prime Minister did that. There may have been some reason for the Prime Minister stating these 10 points, these principles, call them what you like. As the hon. member for Assiniboia suggested, the Prime Minister is clever and shrewd. He also used the word "cagey". I am not using that term. I am just repeating that term. Perhaps it is shrewd and cagey parliamentary strategy or tactics for the Prime Minister to have really given Canada's program for disarmament at such a time that it was not possible for the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Pearson) and the opposition critic on foreign affairs to answer him.

Mr. Graffey: Why do you not answer him now yourself?

Mr. Crestohl: As I say, that may have been very shrewd, careful, cagey chamber tactics. If that is what it was, I do not think it to be very creditable. It may be good politics or good manoeuvring, but I do not think it is very creditable to a country that has in the past been so unanimous on its foreign policy and especially on the matter of disarmament.

Perhaps the minister did not want to launch into a statement on foreign policy. I think he skated rather carefully but not too skilfully over everything that might have been a trouble spot, and this may have been a trouble spot. I am also wondering whether he did this so carefully in order to enable him to proclaim as he did, "Canada has no enemies, all friends". As I said, it is quite cautious on the part of the minister to have avoided trouble spots and then to have announced to the country that Canada has no enemies, that we have nothing but friends.

Mr. Green: May I ask the hon. member a question?

Mr. Crestohl: Yes.

Mr. Green: Was he in the house when the Leader of the Opposition confirmed that statement?