

*External Affairs*

to us last year. I wish that he had pointed it out as clearly again this year. Here is what he said just about a year ago when we had our debate on external affairs. His words will be found at page 1855 of *Hansard* of February 11, 1953.

But in Indo-China which, in some ways, is the most important part of this southeast Asian area, bitter fighting is still going on to keep this territory under nationalist but out of communist control. In a resolution adopted on December 17, 1952, the North Atlantic council expressed its wholehearted admiration for these efforts and acknowledged that the resistance of the free nations of southeast Asia was in fullest harmony with the aims and ideals of the Atlantic community, and agreed that the campaign waged by French union forces in Indo-China merited support from NATO members. Indeed there is a close strategic relationship not only between events in Korea and in Indo-China, but also between events in Indo-China and in western Europe, because events in Indo-China have a very important bearing on France's contribution to the defence of western Europe.

A day or two later the Secretary of State for External Affairs, speaking again in the debate, had this to say, as found on page 1865 of *Hansard*:

The latter problem of Indo-China, which we touched on yesterday and which is so important to the free world, was publicly recognized as such at the December meeting of the North Atlantic council; and I think it is at the root of French fears and hesitations in Europe at the present time.

I suggest, Mr. Speaker, that you might contrast that attitude of 1953 with the attitude now in 1954. In the debate the other day the Secretary of State for External Affairs, dealing with the subject of the Geneva conference, had this to say as found at page 3327 of *Hansard*:

At the Geneva conference there will also be discussed the question of Indo-China . . . this question should be discussed by representatives of France, the United Kingdom, the United States, the U.S.S.R., the Chinese People's Republic and other interested states. As hon. members know, the problem of Indo-China, where bitter fighting has been going on for eight years and is going on today, has never been submitted to the United Nations for consideration, and for that reason Canada has not been as directly concerned with this matter as we were with the aggression in Korea.

Speaking of the critical significance of this struggle, he says further:

. . . it affects the security of the neighbouring countries in southeast Asia and . . . it affects the ability of France to make the maximum contribution to European and North Atlantic security and co-operative arrangements. And so, while we do not expect at Geneva to take any active part in discussion of Indo-China, we shall of course follow these talks with close interest and take advantage of any opportunity that may be afforded to us to help in bringing some satisfactory conclusion out of this particular matter.

At page 3358, in answer to a statement made by the hon. member for Eglinton (Mr. Fleming), the Secretary of State for External Affairs intervened to say:

. . . I said a relatively minor part in the Indo-Chinese part of the conference.

My question is this: If in 1953 the situation in Indo-China and southeast Asia was of such vital importance to the people of the world and to the building up of NATO forces through France's contribution, why does the Secretary of State for External Affairs not take that attitude at the present time? He does not seem to me to take that attitude because at the Geneva conference we are going to stand on the sideline. If the opportunity is offered we may participate. Why do we not take an active part in the deliberations with regard to Indo-China? Is Indo-China not just as important now as it was a year ago? The whole thing, as the Secretary of State for External Affairs pointed out a year ago, is linked together. The drain on France's resources to support the war in Indo-China has restricted her power to participate in the formation of the European defence community.

Because France feels unable to participate to the full extent there, she is not so much interested in the participation of Germany. France has good reason to fear the build-up of the armed strength of Germany. The two are closely related, France's effort in Indo-China and France's contribution to NATO. Yet, we are committed to NATO; we are committed to act shoulder to shoulder with the other forces of the European defence army when it is set up, as the minister of external affairs pointed out in another address. Yet, what are we doing in order to ensure that France can play her full part in that organization of NATO on which we are basing all our hopes.

Now, could we not participate in this support of France on the same basis as the other nations, in order to get some sort of settlement in Indo-China, for our own self interest regarding NATO and EDC. Let us consider for a moment what the war in Indo-China really means. The forces involved are large. It has been estimated there are about 400,000 on each side. The casualties have been heavy. I do not know what they are at the present time, but a year ago the casualties to the French forces alone were 40,000 killed and 50,000 wounded. The struggle is in its eighth year. It was obscured for some considerable time by the Korean conflict, but has been on the same scale with regard to effort and casualties and it is of the same importance.