

External Affairs

Hon. members would naturally desire to know who this Walter S. Robertson had been just before he wrote his October 8, 1949 letter to the Hon. Philip Jessup.

Walter S. Robertson served in China for approximately eighteen months, first with the United States embassy as minister counsellor and second between the ambassadorships of General Hurley and Dr. Stuart as chargé d'affaires, all of this in China. He was then for ten months commissioner and chairman of the Peking executive headquarters. Here is a man who, if he had his eyes open and was honest, probably knew a good deal about China. Mr. Robertson's duties brought him into close personal contact with the highest government officials and with the highest communist officials. He was going back and forth between the two groups of men. Mr. Robertson's reactions to the chaotic scenes in China were at least based upon firsthand impressions. All that I have just given you is to be found in the second paragraph of the letter—which I shall not read to hon. members. It contains the facts which I have given concerning his eighteen months of experience in China.

What does Mr. Robertson think of recognition of China? May I read some very brief extracts from his letter which tend to indicate that. In the letter of October 8, 1949 at page 4, we find these words:

I am strongly of the opinion that recognition of the communist regime would not be to the best interests either of China's suffering millions or of ourselves.

Further down at the end of the paragraph he uses these words:

... if the communists were allowed to stew in their own juice for a time, they would, in my opinion, soon begin to be confronted with the same overwhelming economic and social problems which contributed so largely to the downfall of the national government.

Again he says:

Recognition would bring re-establishment of trade and possibly economic assistance, both vitally necessary to the permanent maintenance of any semblance of economic stability. It would also bring tremendous prestige to the communist movement throughout Asia.

In the next paragraph he uses these words:

Withholding recognition would seem to offer the Chinese people some hope of eventually escaping communist domination and control. And important from our standpoint, it would seem to offer the best hope of re-establishing American prestige and influence in the Pacific.

A final brief quotation closes the letter:

Of one fact we can be certain. The leaders of the communist movement in China are zealous consecrated Marxists intense in their loyalty to Moscow and haters of everything we are and stand for.

[Mr. Blackmore.]

If these words do not bear out exactly what I have said about the nature of the Turko-Mongolian conspiracy which confronts the world today, then I would be very much surprised. Hon. members can draw their own conclusions. Walter Robertson is a man who had been away from the United States long enough so that one would not feel that he was actuated by too much political animosity on one side or the other. I would imagine that you would be justified in trusting this man's words as those of a realistic, objective observer of conditions in China.

I now wish to raise another question. I do not wish to quote anything the minister said. By the way, I do not want to be hard on the minister. I realize that he is in about one of the most difficult positions a man could possibly be in, and I want to approach these problems with sympathy, but at the same time I must be as critical as he has a right to expect an opposition member to be, because that is the only way in which he can get support from the opposition.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Blackmore: That is, in having observations which will point out anything that he may overlook in his earnest desire to solve the problem which confronts him.

I think the minister indicated in one of his talks recently that he had been greatly disillusioned. He had been an idealist; he had been hoping that by constantly extending the hand of fellowship to these communist people he could by and by satisfy them, by and by get them to the point where they would say: we shall try to be decent from here on. But he has discovered that notwithstanding his good will, notwithstanding his every effort—and I think every hon. member will agree that our Secretary of State for External Affairs has certainly done his best as far as talking reason, moderation and common sense to everybody connected with this is concerned—despite all of this the minister has just begun to realize what he should have known six years ago. It was not the minister's fault. I am not saying it is the minister's fault. I must say, Mr. Speaker, that the things which I have said here tonight are based on information which largely came into my possession only within the last two years, things which I have discovered and which I had only just had an inkling of previously to that time.

I had thought at one time that perhaps if we gave the Soviets safe borders they would probably be content. They are always clamouring for "security on boundaries," but the more security of boundaries they obtain