



Bulletin

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THE ROLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

In presenting the 1970-71 estimates for the Department of External Affairs to the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence on March 24, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, described his Department's functions at home and abroad. Part of his statement follows:

...In Ottawa, the Department is active at all levels in the work within the Government on trade matters. In negotiations at international organizations affecting our exports, such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Department plays a leading part. At our missions abroad, External Affairs personnel work closely with foreign governments to secure favorable treatment of Canadian goods. They also operate in support of the activities of the trade commissioners to help get orders and contracts for Canada. Officers from External Affairs are frequently sent abroad to deal with specific trade difficulties that arise with other governments. As an example, within the past fortnight an officer of this Department has led small teams to work out serious trade problems in Mexico and to open up trade opportunities in Australia and New Zealand.

There are other dimensions to the economic activities of External Affairs, questions of air transportation which always involve government-to-government negotiation, the joint management of international

waters with the United States, the whole area of communications. In certain cases the Department negotiates investment guarantee agreements with other governments. These are important where a Canadian corporation wishes to invest in another country and requires reasonable guarantees as to the convertibility of profits and capital gains and for a proper settlement in case of expropriation or takeover by local enterprise.

Canadian corporations engaged in international trade and investment abroad look to our ambassadors for advice on the political climate and economic stability of countries engaging their interest. Our posts and missions are continually involved in the settlement of claims against foreign governments by Canadian businesses and individuals.

The Department's posts and missions abroad do not represent External Affairs as such. They represent all of Canada, and all the functions of the Canadian Government. They provide services to, and represent the interest of, the provinces and cities. Representatives of provincial governments travelling abroad - or of our cities - find our posts and missions ready to help and they make full use of the services we provide, taking for granted that External Affairs represents them as well.

...Officers of the Department pursue Canadian objectives and put forward Canadian initiatives at the United Nations, at the Conference of the Committee on Disarmament, at the NATO Council, and in our bilateral dealings with other nations.

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CULTURAL AND TECHNICAL RELATIONS

Scientific and cultural exchanges are playing an increasing part in our international relations. Canada contributes to the work of specialized agencies of all kinds - the World Health Organization, the International Labor Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization. We carry out a large and growing development assistance program in some 50 countries and have special responsibilities as a member of the