

Parliamentary Participation

In the discussions on education for international affairs, held by the Select Standing Committee on Industrial and International Relations in March-April, 1930, Mr. Graham Spry, at that time National Secretary of the Associated Canadian Clubs, commented on the retarded public and parliamentary interest in such matters. Although he pointed out that the Standing Committee had been in existence for some five years, he understood that this was the first reference of any international subject to the Committee.

What are the weaknesses? Why have Canadians failed to exert the influence which, possibly, might have been exerted in the sphere of international relations? It is certainly not because of the amount of cable news received, or our want of information, and it is certainly not because of any weakness in the Department of External Affairs. The fundamental weakness lies in Canadian public opinion itself. . . May I suggest that possibly more attention might be paid, and more time might be devoted, in the House of Commons, to the discussion of international questions. . .

May I ask, for example, has there been any expression of the policy of the League of Nations of Canada in the Council with respect to the European minorities? Has there been any debate on that excellent body, the International Labour Office at Geneva? And another thing one notices - a lack which one regrets, namely a scarcity of public papers on international relations. For example, is there any public paper setting forth the policy of Canada at Geneva on this question of minorities? It is a question of course which hardly stirs this country, but it is still a great question in Europe. . . There was no guidance in the debates of the House of Commons on that question.

There are the two points; the brevity, or