



INFORMATION DIVISION
DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
OTTAWA - CANADA

50/7

Statement on External Relations by Mr. L.B. Pearson,
Secretary of State for External Affairs, in the
House of Commons, on March 3 and 7, 1950.

I welcome the opportunity that this occasion affords of making the customary statement on international affairs generally, in order to initiate a debate on the subject. I welcome the opportunity because it is, as all hon. members will agree, a matter of the highest importance that the people of this country, whose future has been and will be so deeply affected by international developments, should be kept as fully informed as possible as to the general policy now being pursued by their government in this field.

The best way of keeping our people so informed apart from discussions such as we are having today and discussions before our committee on external affairs, is of course to make as many facts as possible available to them in as accessible a form as possible. That is being done in a number of ways by the department over which I have the honour to preside. On Tuesday last, for instance, I tabled in the house the annual report of the Department of External Affairs, which gives a brief but I think comprehensive review of the activities of the department in the calendar year 1949, and makes it unnecessary for me to give at this time a detailed review of those activities.

The department also publishes annually a report entitled "Canada and the United Nations." That report for 1949 will be tabled shortly. A volume contains not only a review of the activities of the United Nations and Canadian participation in them, but also includes a broad selection of relevant documents. It will show, if anything is needed to show, Mr. Chairman, how seriously we take our membership in the United Nations. I will also show the contribution we are trying to make to the organization which still remains, and will remain, the foundation of our international policy, and in the long run our best hope for peace.

The department also publishes a monthly bulletin entitled "External Affairs", which is circulated pretty widely, and also texts of treaties and publications on international affairs generally, as well as reference papers and material of that kind. Thus we are trying to give the people of the country, as well as members of this house, as much information on external affairs as we can. But it may be said,--in fact it has been said on previous occasions in this house,--that this is merely information about what we have done; that we should give more information to the house and to the public about what we are doing, what we propose to do, and why. Up to a point, of course, I agree with that. At the same time, as I have tried to point out before, you cannot effectively carry on delicate diplomatic negotiations by giving