

administrative details which differ in every post, and the control; and it is a very intricate problem. I have no doubt we shall be establishing more new posts in the next year or eighteen months. I think, as you suggested yourself, it is really common sense as to what ranks first in order of priority, and it depends upon a number of considerations, some mainly economic and some mainly political.

Q. I have heard the opinion expressed by some as to what do these ambassadors and ministers exercise their talents about in some of the South American countries and elsewhere. One can understand that during war there may be questions of international law with which they have to concern themselves, but it gets to be—I will not call it a racket—almost a game if you appoint a minister to one country and then another country will feel it is prejudiced and that its honour is not being sufficiently upheld, if you do not appoint a minister to every country. What does a minister in the Argentine, for instance, do to justify the large expenditure, apart from the fact that we are a first-class nation or a leader in the second group of nations and perhaps have to have representation abroad for the mere formality of it? I am wondering where in many cases the expenditure is justified?—A. Well that is a difficult question to answer.

Q. What do they do all the time with the staffs?—A. The embassy in the Argentine is a pretty busy office. It is small. We are, of course, very interested in receiving very accurate and prompt information as to what is going on in the Argentine because Argentine has been a somewhat troublesome member of the American community during the last few years and it still remains so. You asked me the particular question as to what the minister does. Well as an example the Argentine government about five or six days ago promulgated a decree which would probably have the effect of driving the Sun Life Assurance Company out of Argentina if it were enforced, through discriminatory taxation, and we have instructed the ambassador there, in collaboration with the diplomatic representatives of the other countries which have insurance companies operating in Argentina and are equally effected, to do his best to secure the suspension or abrogation of this decree. There is a practical case in which effective action can certainly be best taken by a diplomatic representative of a fairly high rank.

Mr. JACQUES: Is that likely to lead to trouble?

The WITNESS: I cannot tell you; but it is regarded seriously enough by the Sun Life Company and they telephoned me the other day and asked us to institute inquiries. The matter is still under investigation, and we have not yet had time to receive the full text of the law.

Mr. FRASER: I think in the South American case or in the case of any other country the embassy has influence and can help the Canadian out; and Canadians do get into trouble no matter where they may travel.

The WITNESS: And there is a residual benefit which you cannot estimate, and that is important in Canada: what good-will does an effective diplomatic representation in the capital of a country bring? You cannot say in dollars and cents value. It is sometimes overestimated and sometimes underestimated.

Mr. FRASER: In some country a Canadian might get into difficulties about his visa, say between the Argentine and Chile, and could go to see the ambassador, and he will tell him the channels to take to get that visa. Otherwise he might be held up for two or three weeks.

The WITNESS: I would not like to weary the committee by giving them an impromptu list of the functions of diplomatic missions because it would inevitably mix the petty and unimportant up with the important; but the most of our diplomatic representatives are very active people on the whole.