

*Supply—External Affairs*

on the part of myself or the department to use this bulletin for propaganda in Canada.

**Mr. Fleming:** I just wish to make this observation because I want to keep this discussion right on the point. I am aware of the fact that this bulletin goes abroad. I have been with some of the representatives of the department abroad when it has come into their hands, and certainly no fault would be found with the communication to officers of the department abroad, or diplomatic representatives of the country abroad, of information. It is necessary to keep them well posted on government policy. But it seems to me that if they are to be adequately posted on what is going on in this country, their source of information should not be confined, when it is a matter of extracting speeches made in the House of Commons, to statements made either by the Secretary of State for External Affairs or the Minister of Trade and Commerce.

Surely what is required on the part of these diplomatic representatives or officers abroad, thousands of miles from home and often out of touch with the details of what is going on here, is that they know something of the tenor of the discussion here and the various views that are expressed. A diplomatic representative abroad, let us say somebody 10,000 miles from home, reads this publication. What real information does he derive from this bulletin of July 25? Well, he knows that the Minister of Trade and Commerce has expressed these views before. Surely, it would be instructive to that diplomatic representative to know the nature of the debate in the House of Commons, and that it was not a one-sided debate with only one minister speaking. If it is information that is intended to be conveyed to these diplomatic representatives and officers abroad, then surely it ought to be adequate and well balanced information and not just these well-chosen extracts from ministers' speeches.

**Mr. Pearson:** I quite agree that our officers abroad should not be restricted to this kind of information, and they are not. This air mail bulletin goes out at once as a statement of government policy. We also send *Hansard* to all our officers abroad, as my hon. friend no doubt knows, and we send them other sources of information in respect to what goes on in this House of Commons, on both sides of the house. The air mail bulletin goes out immediately because very often a foreign government will see some statement of Canadian policy in the press and will ask the Canadian representative, "What does your minister say about this?" or, "What is

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government policy?" We try to get that air mail bulletin out to them for that purpose.

In so far as its domestic circulation is concerned, I think I should look into the possibility of cancelling that completely, if that meets the views of my hon. friend.

**Mr. Fleming:** That question arose once before. I remember being asked that question by the former deputy, and I said I would like to be continued on the mailing list because I should like to check up on the sort of thing the department was sending out. In view of the examples which have turned up here tonight I think it was a good thing I did, because I feel the Canadian public is entitled to know what use is being made of public funds in this respect. I doubt very much if the taxpayers of this country, who after all are footing the bill, are going to think that this is the way to keep their diplomatic representatives abroad fully posted on what is going on in Canada. Surely, some of the things that are said by members of the opposition in this house would contribute something to the information of officers abroad.

**Mr. Nesbitt:** I should like to ask the minister a question along the lines of the questions asked by the hon. member for Eglinton. Is this air mail bulletin the usual method of informing departmental officials abroad in our embassies and consulates as to government policy? I would rather have thought important questions of policy or changes of policy would have been sent by code or telex or something of that nature?

**Mr. Pearson:** Yes, of course, that is done. If there is an important statement of government policy in this house and it is of any possible interest to a foreign government, it is telegraphed to our representative in that country at once. Then the telegraphic summary is followed up by an air mail bulletin. Then if these statements were made in the house in a debate, the statements would be sent to the officers abroad in the form of a copy of *Hansard*, the weekly bulletin or external affairs monthly bulletin. I think it is true, therefore, to say that our officers abroad have fairly adequate information about what goes on on both sides of the house in respect to these matters.

**Mr. Fleming:** Only they receive the government statements by air mail and they have to wait until surface mail is delivered to learn the views of the opposition.

**Mr. Hahn:** This question of publicity was raised a year ago by the hon. member for Fraser Valley, and it has always interested