

Thank you, Mr. chairman,

It is not just to the Government of Canada that external affairs are important, however. They are important to everyone because they affect the daily lives of all Canadians. If, as John Donne said, "No man is an island", then no individual citizen is immune to what is happening in the world around him. And I am not referring only to the major global events such as wars and the price of Arabian oil. Each one of us here is directly affected in hundreds of ways, every day of our lives.

Most of you got to work today in a car that was either made in Canada - or at least partly in Canada - under the terms of the auto-pact we have with the U.S.A., or was imported from overseas under the terms of trade agreements we have with the country that made it. I got here by plane, and made it safely because of a traffic control system that is the result of careful international cooperation and agreement. The frequency of the radio station you listened to on the way to the office was assigned under an international agreement. You have a Japanese television? a suit of English worsted wool? a yen for French wine or for a holiday in Hawaii or Mexico? You may be in the shipping, lumber, mining, financial or publishing business. You may want to make a telephone call to a friend in Seattle or write a letter to a relative in Europe. Well, you can't have those things, and you can't do those things without being involved in external affairs. It's not a question of saying "I've never bothered to make a study of Canadian foreign policy". That's not the point. The point is that, like it or not, it matters to you, and unless you have the mental energy output of a salt-water clam you have opinions that concern our country's foreign policy.

I say this from direct personal experience. Ever since I've been a Member of Parliament I have had a weekly open-line show on radio in Kingston. It is one of the best ways of keeping in touch that I know. It has been fascinating to notice how the show has changed since I became Secretary of State for External Affairs. It used to be that hardly any questions or comments were about foreign policy matters. These days, however, we spend most of our time talking about these issues. The knowledge and interest were there already - people just needed to be reminded.

It is the Government's job, and specifically my job, to use the resources that are voted to us by Parliament to further the interests of Canadians as far as relations with foreign countries are concerned. We often hear that Canada has a non-partisan foreign policy - the issues are perceived by both the Government and Opposition in pretty much the same terms. I suppose that this is because we all have a relatively similar idea of what Canadians want in terms of relations with other countries - what they want to get in the way of benefits, and what they want to give in the way of assistance as members of the international community. We have differences, of course, but we also have much common ground.