

## THE SENATE

### THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

#### EVIDENCE

Ottawa, Thursday, February 13, 1969

The Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs met this day at 10 a.m.

**The Chairman:** Honourable senators, this morning we begin a series of meetings in which the committee will examine Canada's relations with the Caribbean region.

Before introducing our witness for this morning, Mr. Willis Armstrong, may I take the opportunity to report briefly on the discussion in our organizational meeting last Thursday when the committee decided how it should function in the months ahead.

We have decided that the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs should henceforth undertake a regularly scheduled program of work, involving serious in-depth examination of foreign policy issues of concern to Canada. There seems to be general agreement that it would be in the best interests of obtaining an effective result if this committee were to focus on a specific area so that Canada's relationship thereto could be particularly examined. In other words, the committee should address itself to areas of study that are of prime importance to Canada, but on an overall and long-term scale.

We see the expanded role for this committee as being one of the means through which senators can play a continuing and active role in the Parliament of our country. We recognize in full that the approach we have decided to follow is necessarily experimental and that we shall have to be prepared to be flexible and to adapt our practices as the program unfolds. In trying to work out a program for the Senate, I think it important to bear in mind that our work and the work of the Committee on External Affairs and National Defence in the House of Commons should be mutually complementary.

In order to provide support for our work, your committee has authorized the entering into of an agreement with the Parliamentary Centre for Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade. The Director of the Parliamentary Centre, Mr. Peter Dobell, who is on my left, will act as adviser to the committee in developing

its program. He has also recruited to his staff Mr. Bernard Wood, now at Carleton University, who will act as the full-time research assistant to the committee after his comprehensive examinations for his M. A. have been completed in early May. We believe that these arrangements should contribute to the effective work of the committee.

I have already mentioned that the committee has decided that it should begin its work with an examination of Canada's relations with the Caribbean region. As you may recall in the Senate on the evening that this motion was presented by Senator Martin I made some remarks from which I should now like to quote because I think it more or less summarizes what I have in mind. As I said in the Senate on February 4:

I believe that the Caribbean area presents to Canada a particular challenge inasmuch as most of the problems plaguing the peace of the world are there present—the problems of size, of race, of economic need and of differing political and social goals. Inasmuch as Canada cares about these issues, the Caribbean allows a unique opportunity for Canadian involvement. Not only is the region of a size to attempt considerable and perhaps decisive impact by a Canadian program, but there is already a predisposition in the area for a Canadian presence. Furthermore, Britain's withdrawal and the apparent disinclination of the United States to increase its commitment in the area, leave a neat geographical sphere of influence where Canadian effort will not be overshadowed.

I would like to speak briefly about the program. The committee's program of work is divided into two main phases. Prior to the Easter recess the committee will hear expert witnesses who will discuss the region and its problems. This will provide the background for the second phase of our examination, which will involve considering in detail Canada's relations with the countries of the region.

We have already arranged for three witnesses. In addition to Mr. Armstrong, the committee will hear on February 25 Mr. William Demas, now Economic Adviser to the Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago, who will be appearing in his private capacity as the