

ask that the Standing Orders make some provision for the work of these associations.

On February 13, 1975, the President of the Privy Council gave notice of a motion that the Standing Committee on External Affairs and National Defence be empowered to hear reports from delegations attending interparliamentary meetings. While there was general agreement that reports ought to be received by the Committee, there was some uncertainty about how this would work in practice. The Speaker therefore again asked the Committee of Procedure and Organization to review the question. The matter is currently before the Committee, and the problem is basically the same — how to find a compromise that will satisfy both those who believe parliamentary associations perform a useful and important function and those who believe the House is too busy to spend its time on matters emanating from such informal bodies.

Foreign affairs

In the past, parliamentarians have probably been less well-informed on foreign affairs than on other matters of public concern. To most legislators, the social and economic problems affecting their constituencies are far more real and immediate. There is normally little pressure from constituents urging Members to concentrate on international issues. Parliamentary associations have gone a long way towards encouraging interest in this area. No doubt conferences have sometimes been treated as junkets, and there will

always be individuals interested only in visiting exotic places, admiring magnificent buildings, attending banquets and taking carefully-planned tours. However, there are many others who do take advantage of the opportunities offered by these associations both for personal development and for occasional diplomatic manoeuvring. Moreover, in recent years changes in the method of selecting Canadian delegates have tended to favour serious candidates over those mainly interested in a holiday.

Parliamentary associations have possibilities and limitations peculiar to their nature and must be judged by criteria appropriate to their character. Parliamentary associations are basically concerned with intangibles such as the education of legislators, the clarification of issues and the improvement of communication, and they have not been, and probably never will be, subjects for quantitative analysis by modern social scientists. However, these associations are still part of the total political process whereby governments and individuals try to handle international problems and they add one more element to the total political equipment available to nations for the conduct of international affairs. Like that of other institutions, their usefulness depends mainly on the willingness and ability of participants to make them work. As far as Canada is concerned, there is evidence that more and more members are becoming increasingly adept at making use of opportunities offered by parliamentary associations.

*Additional
element
of political
equipment*

Book review

They called the man The Chief

By Eugene Forsey

I found this a fascinating book. Some reviewers have been disappointed. I think that is because they expected too much. These, after all, were not Mr. Diefenbaker's years of power, and it is unreasonable to demand that he should reveal deep secrets of high politics — the more so because he has not retired, but is still in the thick of the fight, and seems to count that day lost when he has not made a speech, long or short, in the House of Commons or to one of the many audiences that constantly call on him for wit and wisdom.

The earlier chapters seem to me a valuable social document, painting a vivid picture of an age that has vanished almost as completely as the eighteenth century — the age that came to an end when, as Grey said, "the lights went out all over Europe", in August 1914. It was an age that knew not electronics, or the atom bomb, or nuclear power, or the population explosion; an age unconscious of pollution, or the danger of world shortages of food, raw materials and energy; an age when the railway was king, not threatened even