

Q: There are elections scheduled for November.

DPM/SSEA: There are elections scheduled for November and I think it would be very worthwhile, not only for Nicaragua itself, but for the world, if these elections were genuine elections in which opposition parties were permitted to participate fully and under the auspices of an electoral machinery in which all the parties have confidence. I had a full discussion on this matter with the Council of State and its Chairman and expressed those views to them, because I think it is important that when visitors go to Nicaragua or any other country, that views are expressed directly rather than by long distance and we did have a very good discussion.

Q: Mr. MacEachen, you said this morning and re-emphasized things that you said in other places, although to me they sound a little more firmly convinced this morning, but you said that we take a different view from the United States towards Central America. You said we need to maintain relationships with Nicaragua. You've just repeated that we need to continue to have first-hand experience with them. Would that lead to the conclusion that we ought to have an Embassy there? Right now we're dependent on the United States for reports from that part of the world, except I think for our Embassy in Costa Rica.

DPM/SSEA: Well, no, we're not dependent on the United States. We have an Embassy in Costa Rica. Our Ambassador is accredited to Nicaragua and he and his staff try to do their best to keep in touch with the situation in Nicaragua by visiting.

Q: Wouldn't that argue though for an Embassy in Nicaragua?

DPM/SSEA: Well, I think one can make an argument for embassies in Nicaragua and other locations in the world, and if one had unlimited resources, one would probably open an Embassy, but we are doing our utmost to maintain close contact with the Nicaraguans by the additional resources that we have placed in Costa Rica to handle the situation in Nicaragua. We've put more people there to do that job, and I appreciate fully the necessity of having first-hand information. When I was in these various capitals, it was possible to talk not only to the Nicaraguans, not only to the Americans, whom I met at various public events, but also to the Ambassadors of many countries throughout the world, and from them it is possible to get a perspective. I think it would be a mistake to think that Canadians talk only to the Americans when we are in a posting abroad. We talk to everybody who has useful information to offer to us and I think that's the only way to get a balanced view because we ought to try and know the truth and not take an ideological approach to a situation like Nicaragua. It's much more complex than one would believe and one can't be enlightened simply by ideological slogans.