

sensitive consequence, they had better be careful to present this to the Canadian people for what it is and for nothing more.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs):** Mr. Speaker, as the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. Macquarrie) said, I welcomed the action of the opposition in putting this motion on the table on one of the opposition days because I was very anxious to find out what views the opposition might have on the protocol that had been signed by the prime ministers of Canada and of the Soviet Union. I listened with great interest to what the hon. member for Hillsborough had to say, and I must say I remain very confused as to the views of the Official Opposition on the subject that they have raised.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Sharp:** At one point I began to be encouraged when I listened carefully to the phrases near the conclusion of the very witty and good speech of my hon. friend. It seemed to me that he said—I think this is the position of the Official Opposition, and if it is not, perhaps I can be corrected—that he favours this protocol. I think that was the position he took. He then went on to try to get on the other side of the subject, if he could so that those in his party who oppose the protocol could say that he had in fact not endorsed it. However, perhaps the party itself can clear up its own confusion.

So far as the government is concerned, it is strongly in favour of this protocol. Indeed, one of the principal reasons it is in favour is exactly the reason put forward by the hon. member at the conclusion of his speech when, in speaking about the trip of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to the Soviet Union, he said that there will remain on the table problems of great importance. That is precisely the reason it is important that we should have improved methods of consultation with the Soviet Union. That is why I have no question in my mind about this protocol, its purpose and what it will do to the future. As for the comments that the hon. gentleman has made about what the Prime Minister said in the Soviet Union, of course the Prime Minister himself will deal with these questions.

Let me direct my attention to the terms of the motion itself which says that we should have brought this protocol before the House of Commons for discussion before it was signed by the Prime Minister. As the House knows, it is clear under our constitution that the power to make arrangements with other nations resides in the Crown, that is to say, in the government. I do not believe there is any dispute about it, and my hon. friend proved that fact. It has always been Canadian practice to table documents of an important nature in the House as soon as it may conveniently be done. In this case, as hon. members are aware, the protocol was tabled on May 20, a day after it was signed in Moscow. This protocol envisages consultations on a wide range of issues between the

#### *U.S.S.R.-Canada Protocol*

government of Canada and the Soviet Union. It does not stand alone, but is the latest in a series of arrangements for consultation entered into by successive Canadian governments, of which one of the first was with one of the great powers referred to by the hon. member for Hillsborough, namely, the United States.

Let us look at what happened on that occasion. That was entered into in 1953 by an exchange of notes between the two governments. I do not think that hon. members question the importance of that document. If I had been the secretary of state for external affairs at that time, I would have referred to it as an important and historic document, exactly the words that I used the other day with respect to the protocol for consultation with the Soviet Union. I do not think that hon. members either will question the value to Canada of this joint committee which, with few exceptions, has met annually to discuss matters of substance. There was no debate whatever in the House of Commons prior to the exchange of notes. It was reported to the House, as I have reported on behalf of the government, the signing of the protocol with the Soviet Union.

Now, I come to one that is perhaps of even more significance in the light of the fact that the Official Opposition has taken exception to the procedure that was followed. I refer to the Canada-Japan Ministerial Committee which was established on June 26, 1961 by the government of which the right hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) was the prime minister. This committee has met regularly since and has proved to be a valuable instrument in the conduct of relations with our neighbour to the west. Indeed, among the instruments that provide for consultation, and we have very few of these, this was the second to be established. It was also an historic and important document. In this case, there was not even an exchange of notes. The committee was set up and a joint communique issued in Ottawa by the right hon. member for Prince Albert, then prime minister, and Mr. Ikeda, then prime minister of Japan. They did not even sign a protocol; they issued a joint communique. The most careful perusal of the official record fails to disclose that the right hon. member for Prince Albert found it necessary or appropriate to consult Parliament before taking action.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Sharp:** Arrangements of this kind are enabling in nature and do not necessarily impose obligations upon either side. A Mexico-Canada Joint Committee was established by exchange of notes on November 22, 1968, without prior debate in the House. I bring these facts to the attention of the House because they show the flexibility that is possible within these arrangements. In fact, the joint committee that was established has not yet met. This does not suggest that the government does not attach great importance to our relations with Mexico or that the committee will not meet. As a matter of fact, I expect that it will meet this year, but it has been a matter of convenience and therefore these kinds of