

The purpose of my being here this afternoon is to answer, or try to answer, any questions you may have arising out of the estimates of my Department. What I have to say by way of introduction will, therefore, be very brief.

When I appeared at the Committee to discuss the estimates last year, the Department was facing a very difficult budget situation. We had to close certain missions, recruitment of officers had stopped, staffs at our missions abroad were being cut back. Criticism of the Department was coming from all directions, the very role, function and future of the Department were under questioning. In the face of these adversities, morale in the Department was suffering.

From that low point we have made tremendous progress. Two missions, to the People's Republic of China and the Vatican, have been opened. In the current year we will be opening a mission in Algeria. The opening of a mission in Zambia in which I know this Committee is particularly interested, is under study; and plans are advancing for the opening of a permanent observer mission to the O.A.S. in Washington. Opening missions is not an end in itself, or in itself significant evidence of progress, but in all these cases the aim is the furtherance of essential Canadian objectives and interests.

We are again hiring officers. Many of our missions overseas continue to be understaffed with their resources stretched to the limit. The reorganization of the Department and the moves toward greater integration of the whole foreign service will, through time, ease this problem. I understand that Mr. Ritchie reported fully to the Committee on these organizational changes.

Morale in the Department is now, I believe, much improved. The publication of the foreign policy papers last June has given the Department a clear mandate from the Government and a new sense of direction. This, in turn, has given the Department's officers a sense of accomplishment and the feeling that once again they have an opportunity to serve their country. "Foreign Policy for Canadians" has had a mixed reception from the interested public -- anything else would have been a miracle. It has stimulated dialogue between the Department and its friends and critics from which both sides have benefitted. Your Committee, in its hearings on the general paper, has made an important contribution to this dialogue.

In preparing for my appearance this afternoon, I have been reflecting on the way in which the policy guidance provided by the foreign policy papers is being given effect. I would like to give you some brief highlights which will make clear that the foreign policy papers are not a theoretical exercise but a present reality in our work.