

The Address—Mr. Pearson

at the opening of the session, and the amendment thereto of Mr. Drew, and the amendment to the amendment of Mr. Coldwell.

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): In rising to participate in this debate, Mr. Speaker, I should like in the first place to join with other members who have already spoken in warmly and sincerely congratulating the mover (Mr. Larson) and the seconder (Mr. Dumas) of the address. They have discharged their duties in a manner which brings credit to themselves and, I am sure, satisfaction to their constituents.

In the speech from the throne reference is made to the international situation; and members who have already participated in the debate, notably the hon. member for Rose-town-Biggar (Mr. Coldwell), have enlarged on that aspect of the speech. If time permitted I should like to make some general observations on matters which have been referred to by other speakers, but on this occasion I will not do so. I hope to have an opportunity shortly, when the estimates of my department are called, to deal with some of the points which have been made by other hon. members during the course of the debate. Today, however, I think it would be desirable if I made a report to the house, as briefly as I can, on the visit of my colleague, the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Mayhew) and myself, from which we have just returned, to Ceylon and certain other countries of the Far East which we were able to visit after the commonwealth conference at Colombo.

During that mission, Mr. Speaker, the members of our party travelled some 27,000 miles; and for a considerable part of that time we were in the efficient and courteous care of the Royal Canadian Air Force and a *North Star* plane of that air force. I should like to convey the thanks of the members of our party to the R.C.A.F. for the way in which they took care of us. The aircrew were a credit to their service in the air, and they were good representatives of their country when they were on the ground.

I should like also to express our gratitude to the officials who accompanied us on the journey, and who gave us that efficient, informed and industrious help which we expect from the public service of Canada.

During that trip, Mr. Speaker, we received very much kindness and warm hospitality from all the countries that we were able to visit. On this occasion I should like to acknowledge that kindness and that hospitality. We realized, of course, that it was shown to us not in our personal capacity but because we represented Canada, a country whose reputation and good name stands high in those parts of the world.

If I may I should like to divide the observations I am making today into two parts. The first part will be an attempt to deal with the commonwealth conference which took place at Ceylon in January. In the second part I shall deal with some matters of interest in our journey to countries in the far east after the conference.

The Colombo conference took place in the week of January 9. Its official title was: "Commonwealth meeting on foreign affairs." It was the first meeting of this kind that has been held. Of course commonwealth meetings on foreign affairs have taken place in the past. We have discussed foreign affairs at meetings of prime ministers; we have had discussions between heads of commonwealth delegations at United Nations assembly meetings; but this was the first time that a commonwealth meeting was held which was composed mainly of foreign ministers of commonwealth countries, and which dealt exclusively with questions of foreign affairs.

It was the first time also, Mr. Speaker, that a meeting of commonwealth ministers had been held on the territory of an Asian member of the commonwealth. This is a fact, I think, of some significance. It is a recognition of the fact that today the commonwealth has no fixed centre in London or anywhere else. It is a recognition also of the importance of the Asian members of the new commonwealth, whose culture and traditions are very different from those of the rest of us, but whose association with us in the commonwealth is of such great value and is so highly esteemed by the other members.

The fact that we met in Ceylon is also a recognition of the importance of Asian problems today, and of the necessity of looking at world problems from an Asian point of view as well as from that of Europe and the north Atlantic. It is just as well to remember that the three Asian members of the commonwealth at Colombo represented 440 million people, while the rest of us, in our home territories, represented only 75 million. This new commonwealth is providing not only a link between the Asian and the other nations that comprise it, but also a very valuable link between the east and the west.

During our conference, Mr. Speaker, we were the guests of the government of Ceylon; and we were grateful, as I am sure the other delegations were, for the hospitality that was shown to us by the government of Ceylon and for the arrangements which it so efficiently made.

The chairman of the conference was the Prime Minister of Ceylon, Mr. Senanayake,