

The 1948 debate seemed to be of a higher order than that of the previous year because most participants appeared to know more and to have thought more deeply about a broader range of problems. As is quite common in the Canadian House of Commons the majority of speakers in both debates were members of opposition parties. These general debates on foreign affairs took place after a motion had been made that the House go into Committee of Supply. Other discussions on more specific matters of foreign relations normally occur at various times during each session of Parliament when the House is asked to approve treaties and legislation and pass on departmental estimates. Reflecting the pre-eminent role of the Cabinet and parliamentary limits on procedures in financial matters, discussions on appropriations in the Canadian House of Commons are generally cursory. The House hears from time to time, as well, short government statements on items of foreign policy. Like every other topic of government, the conduct of foreign affairs is the subject of many questions in the House. (1)

This writer went on to speak of the other Chamber:

Discussions in the Senate chamber itself on foreign affairs have been rare and brief. For example, when in 1947 the government introduced legislation respecting its powers under Article 41 of the United Nations Charter debates in the Senate, from the introduction of the bill to its passage after third reading, occupied a total of five pages of Senate Hansard as compared with forty pages on the same bill in the House. On foreign relations the main functions of the Senate and its External Affairs Committee have been to defer to the House on matters of policy and politics but to provide secondary amendments and attend to matters with which the House has not time to deal. (2)

#### Parliament and the Department

It follows that since, on balance, Parliament as such played a relatively indifferent role in foreign policy, which as Mr. Bennett claimed was normally the prerogative of the executive or "government",

(1) R.B. Farrell: "The Planning of Foreign Policy in Canada", World Politics, Vol.1, No.3, April, 1949, pp370-1.

(2) Ibid, p.373.