

Lack of Debate on Foreign Affairs

enemies. If we sided with the United States, as I think we should, we would unquestionably alienate a number of our Latin American friends. If our image is not very good in the United States at this time, it certainly would be far worse under these circumstances. I think it is advantageous that nothing has been done in this regard.

Canada should and can understand better our relationships with Latin American countries, but I do not think we should use the vehicle of the Organization of American States to do so. Perhaps we could increase our understanding in this way. Of course everything cannot be done at once, just as Rome was not built in a day; but perhaps we could increase our understanding and friendly relationships with Latin American countries by using—that is perhaps an unfortunate term—our association with that Latin American country with which most Canadians are familiar, and I refer to Mexico. Canada and Mexico have a great deal in common. Both countries border on the United States. Mexico is somewhat smaller in area than Canada, but has a larger population. Both countries enjoy unique relationships with the United States. We in this country have a very profitable, useful and helpful arrangement with the United States whereby we have an exchange of parliamentary visits once or twice each year. I understand that the United States has a similar exchange program with Mexico. Members of the United States Congress exchange visits with Members of the Mexican Chamber of Deputies.

Let me suggest to the Government that it might be a good idea for Members of the Canadian Parliamentary Association, and other Members of this House, to exchange visits with the elected representatives of the Mexican parliamentary body. Perhaps during these visits matters could be discussed in a very concrete way, improving relationships between our countries. I am sure this suggestion would be acceptable to Canada.

Mexico is becoming one of the most popular areas to the south of Canada for visits by tourists. One has only to consider the agreements made between the Canadian Pacific Air Lines and Aeronaves de Mexico to gain some understanding of the increasing travel between the two countries. Last year more than 20,000 Canadian tourists visited Mexico. I am sure this travel will increase. Mexico has a great number of products which could be purchased by Canada. This would in turn increase our balance of trade.

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I do not wish to expand on this idea at this time, but it is something that could be considered as a first step toward a better understanding of Latin American countries. Mexico is one of our very best customers so far as iron and steel products are concerned, including rails and locomotives. Canada is very well regarded in Mexico and I think an exchange of parliamentarians between Canada and Mexico would help us to understand the ways of Latin American people. I think it would also help us to increase our interests in Latin America, and would allow us to do so without the necessity of our becoming involved in that embarrassing organization known as the O.A.S.

I conclude what I have to say at this time, Mr. Speaker, by again asking the Prime Minister to discuss this matter with Members of his Cabinet, and with the House Leader in particular, so that at least one or perhaps two days could be set aside for a discussion of foreign affairs as soon as possible. I hope such a debate will not be delayed much longer.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Batten): Order, please. Does the hon. Member for Burnaby-Coquitlam wish to discuss the grievance raised by the hon. Member for Oxford?

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, I was not aware that the hon. Member had raised a grievance. I thought he was asking that at some future date there be a debate on foreign affairs. As far as the Members of this group are concerned, we would welcome such a debate and might have precipitated such a debate during this supply motion except for the fact that we thought it would be better to wait until the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Martin) returned to the House. I do not intend to follow the general tenor of the remarks of the hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Nesbitt), but rather to deal with another matter.

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, may I just say a word or two about the matter raised by the hon. Member for Oxford regarding a debate on external affairs, which he has advocated and which has been put to the House before as something we ought to do.

I appreciate the desirability of holding such a debate, as there are a good many matters taking place in the world today that should be debated. Let me say this afternoon, however, that the best way of doing this might be by setting up the External Affairs