

Supply—External Affairs

the premises were available, space was available at prices that seemed to be attractive to whoever happened to be in office at that time. I even told him that I would not even discuss the matter with my colleagues because we did not want in any way to become involved in the project. We cannot prevent them from saying, if they choose, that they are prepared to have a long-term outstanding option in favour of the government to purchase. But I was shown the notes of what he intended to say, and I asked him to make a change where he intended to say that options had been offered to the government. I said: No, you have not offered anything to the government. I am not the government and there has been no proposal submitted to the government. You can say, if you like, that your friends are prepared to offer an option to the government but I would ask you not to say that you have offered one because, in talking to me, you are not talking to the government.

The Deputy Chairman: Does the item carry?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, there was not an offer made by Mr. Lawson but what were the negotiations that he placed before the Prime Minister? What was the ultimate price to be? What basis of negotiation was placed before the Prime Minister, whether he was the government or not? Mr. Lawson wrote certain letters, apparently, and in them must have embodied something of his plan.

Mr. St. Laurent: I will show my hon. friend the letters and my answers. There were no negotiations. I did not want to go into any details at all. I did not want to go into the figures or to have any responsibility whatsoever for the project. I shall be glad to let my hon. friend see the file.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I would ask the minister what plans, if any, he or the department has for the opening up of other embassies. Is there any such plan in mind in any country other than those in which embassies have now been established or in which there are ministries?

Mr. Pearson: Yes, Mr. Chairman. As indicated to the committee on external affairs, plans and appropriations are being voted, I hope, for the opening up of new missions this year. I am not in a position to mention some of the countries because we are in the middle of negotiations with them now. I should be glad to tell my hon. friend in confidence but until we get those negotiations cleared I am not in a position to make public all of the countries in which we are going to open this year. We are converting a trade office in the Dominican republic into a branch

office, if you like to call it that, of the embassy in Cuba; and in Haiti there will be a branch office of the embassy in Mexico. That is all I am in a position to announce at this time but there will be two or three more later in the year.

Mr. Knowles: Just on a question of privilege, Mr. Chairman, may I ask this question. I wonder whether we could not get along for the rest of the evening without the services of the page boys?

The Deputy Chairman: Shall the item carry?

Item agreed to.

90. Canadian representation at international conferences, \$175,000.

Mr. Low: I want to refer to an article which appeared on the front page of the *Ensign*, a newspaper which enjoys quite a wide circulation in some parts of Canada. This article purports to be a dispatch from Geneva under the hand of a writer by the name of Bertrand. I have sent a copy of the article to the minister, and along with it I have sent a copy of some questions which I think it would be wise to have answered at this time in the committee.

I think perhaps we might ask the minister if he would be prepared to comment on the article using the ten questions I have sent him as a basis for his reply. I do not mean to say that he should be confined to these questions if he wishes to go beyond them or that he should answer them exactly as they are written or in that order. Since I formulated these questions for the purpose of bringing out the truth and no other purpose, I have decided that perhaps No. 5 might not be a proper question, and I will be perfectly satisfied if the minister chooses to disregard that one or to comment on it in some other fashion than answering it directly. If the minister will comment on the article with these questions in mind and put on the record the truth of the situation, I am quite sure that he can set at rest a good many minds that may be somewhat disturbed on reading the article for the first time.

Mr. Pearson: I have the article before me. My hon. friend was good enough to tell me that he was going to raise this matter. Indeed, he was good enough to send me a copy of the article and a copy of his ten questions which I now reduce to nine. The article is from the issue of the *Ensign* of May 29. It is headed, "Ronning appointment viewed with interest." I have read the article. I read it before the hon. member was good enough to send it to me. I can assure him that the facts are not as stated in