

External Affairs in Parliament

Death of Australian Prime Minister

On December 18, Mr. Pearson paid the following tribute to Australia's Prime Minister Harold Holt, whose death in a swimming incident had occurred over the preceding weekend :

Mr. Speaker, I am sure members of this House would expect me to express our feeling of shock and grief at the tragic accident that resulted in the loss of the Prime Minister of Australia over the weekend.

Mr. Holt was a very distinguished Australian public servant over many years, culminating in his succession to Sir Robert Menzies as Prime Minister only a relatively short time ago. In that post he had so much to offer and so little time in which to offer it. He was a very strong supporter of the Commonwealth and a very good friend of Canada. I know from talks with him that he was most anxious to deepen and develop the friendship between our two countries, both as members of the Commonwealth and as Pacific powers.

Mr. Holt will be greatly missed, of course, in his own country but also outside Australia. He was a man of energy, great enthusiasm and warm natural friendliness, qualities which we associate with Australians. He was a good and valued friend of many of us, including myself. I had the privilege of welcoming him to Ottawa officially last summer, and my wife and I had the privilege and pleasure of spending a day or so with him in the country. It was only last Friday, Mr. Speaker, that I received a message from him expressing the hope that my own plans would not prevent a visit to Australia and New Zealand which I was anticipating. He said he looked forward to receiving me as host and as friend.

Our deepest and most heartfelt sympathy goes out to his devoted and courageous wife, Mrs. Holt, and to the members of the family.

Cyprus Situation

In reply to a question on December 4 as to "the situation between Greece and Turkey", and "the position of the Canadian troops who form part of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus, as a result of last week's developments", the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Paul Martin, said :

Mr. Speaker, I have nothing to report on the position of the Canadian contingent other than that our troops there are carrying out their duties. Yesterday morning the Secretary-General appealed to the Governments of Greece, Turkey and Cyprus to end any threat to the security of each other. This