

Supply—External Affairs

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

The Chairman: Order. House again in committee of supply, vote No. 1 of the estimates of the Department of External Affairs.

1. Departmental administration, \$7,648,800.

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Chairman, the motion to refer the estimates of the department to the standing committee on external affairs gives the first occasion that I have had since assuming my present responsibilities to make a comprehensive statement on Canadian external policies and the international developments to which they are directed.

I have, of course, already made a number of statements in the house on specific aspects of foreign affairs which from time to time have seemed to require special comment. And so I do not intend to cover every aspect of our foreign policy today. Instead, I should like to concentrate on those international developments which are of general concern because of their bearing on international peace and security, and on those which have particular relevance to Canadian external activity.

As we all know, there are certain factors which condition our responses to the shifting international events of our time. Factors such as history, our traditions, our resources, our geographical location and our cultural composition are present at all times, whatever the issue happens to be or whatever government in Canada finds itself in power, and they combine to create what I would call a natural Canadian reaction to any major international development. At the very least, these continuing factors tend to define the limits within which Canadian policy can develop and still remain true to our national values. They give a general continuity to Canadian policy which transcends party considerations, and I am sure that all hon. members would wish to see continued the non-partisan spirit that customarily has been reflected in our external policies.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Until last year.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Just as there is a constant theme running through Canadian foreign policy over the years, so also do I believe there is a continuity of external policies on the part of our great neighbour to the south. Even so profound a tragedy as that which befell the United States just a week ago will not alter in any fundamental way the firm but wise and humane qualities which generally have been the hallmark of American leadership on the great international issues of our times, those affecting peace and war, and the task of raising living standards of the less fortunate peoples of the world.

[Mr. Martin (Essex East).]

The wanton crime which ended a brilliant young life and career, striking grief into the hearts of all citizens of the world, as the late President Kennedy often called his fellow human beings, may lead to a pause while the new President gathers to himself the strands of office; but the course of American policy, as we know now from his statement yesterday, remains unchanged. The values by which John Kennedy lived, and for which he died, will live on. I know the house will join with me in extending to the President of the United States our best wishes and our pledge of Canadian co-operation in discharging the arduous responsibilities which have fallen to him.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Among the tasks which will confront him are a number of important and delicate questions affecting Canadian-United States relations. It is not my intention today to go into detail with regard to these relations, except to assure the committee that all of them are under intensive discussion with the United States government; in a general way these discussions were continued with the meeting of the Prime Minister of Canada and the President of the United States on Monday last.

Institutional and personal relations between these two countries are so varied and so intertwined that problems are bound to be manifold, and some conflict of interest cannot be avoided in intercourse between two nations. But without continuous communication in an effort to find solutions that will satisfy the interests of the United States and Canada, no tolerable solutions will be found. It has therefore been a primary objective of government policy to see to it that a genuine dialogue was resumed at all levels between our two countries. This process was begun at Hyannis Port and has been maintained ever since through a variety of channels. It is our intention that it should be continued uninterrupted, however difficult the problems may seem, and I believe it was not without significance that the Canadian Prime Minister was among the first, along with the President of France, to be received by the new President of the United States on Monday last.

At this meeting with President Johnson, which I attended, it was clearly evident that the President regards the relations between our two countries as important, and I can say it was quite evident that he will derive considerable satisfaction from continuous contacts with the Prime Minister of Canada.

In assessing the international atmosphere as a whole, which is one of the things I wish to do in this statement, the state of relations between the communists and the rest of us is