

Supply—External Affairs

three or four intermediate salaries offered, according to qualifications and experience.

The hon. member may be interested to know that the foreign service officer competition now taking place seems to have been successful in terms of the number of applicants. There will be interviews this year of over 300 applicants, which is almost a record. This speaks well for the interest that the young men and women of Canada have in the foreign service.

With regard to the particular item before the committee I should like to say that this represents a complete new program in Canada's external aid policy. The new loans in the amount of \$50 million this year or \$150 million over a three year period represent a very important new aspect in Canada's external aid program. The motives are the same as those which for the past 14 years have motivated Canada's outright grants.

Initially the terms are expected to be comparable with those of the international development association, that is, a 50 year maturity period with 10 years grace, non-interest bearing and with a service charge of three quarters of 1 per cent. The development loan program will be directed toward countries now eligible to receive Canadian bilateral grant assistance and in addition will permit a further Canadian contribution to economic progress in Latin America in close co-operation with the international development bank. My hon. friend will remember that last week we announced that \$10 million had been apportioned, which represents a departure in the form of assistance by Canada to Latin American countries. Negotiations with regard to this loan and all the other loans that will be made under this vote will be carried on with various countries.

In short, parliament is being asked to provide under this vote for a new instrument to provide assistance. The loans are based on bilateral negotiations based in turn upon a consideration of projects that can best be assisted in this way. I think this represents a very important departure. It is one that was not established first by Canada but we are among the first to use this kind of assistance apart from the United States which I believe was the first country to embark on this type of program.

Mr. Nesbitt: I have just one question I should like to ask the minister before we take advantage of the opportunity to hear from the hon. member for Red Deer. Is the minister in a position to confirm the press report, which I presume he must have had

at his disposal, that 800 Belgian paratroopers are based on Ascension island ready to land in Stanleyville to save the lives of the white hostages held there by the rebel government of the Congo? Apparently these troops arrived at Ascension island a few hours ago with the permission of the government of the United Kingdom and are ready to attack Stanleyville if necessary. I wonder if the minister can confirm that report, because it might be helpful to the discussion?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): Mr. Chairman, there are many things about this matter I could confirm but as my hon. friend, who has had a very deep and penetrating experience of foreign affairs, knows, you do not disclose intended strategy. I know it is in the newspapers but my hon. friend will realize there are many things in the newspapers which are accurate. There are many things that might be in the newspapers which are not there. There are plans to try to relieve these unfortunate hostages and I will wait until the proper moment to disclose all the other steps that are being taken to try to relieve the situation. I am sure my hon. friend, with his deep understanding of these problems, will understand why I take this position.

Mr. Nesbitt: Mr. Chairman, the press report indicates that this move was officially announced by the Belgian government and I was wondering whether the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the government have been informed and whether this report is correct, because it might make some difference to our discussions.

Mr. Martin (Essex East): This matter is one that is not under the control of any one government, either the Belgian government or any other.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, this type of answer does not add anything at all either to the knowledge of the house or to assuage the feelings of the Canadian people. The question asked by the hon. member for Oxford is one that should be answered. Is there a basis for this report? Is the Belgian government in this announcement placing before the world as a whole information that is not correct? I simply cannot understand this assumed attitude—I do not quite know how to describe it—of pretence on the part of the minister, that for him to give information like this which is already known world wide would be harmful under the circumstances. This is nothing but nonsense on his part and he knows it. If he had been asked for information as to courses being taken which are