

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS IN PARLIAMENT

Statements of Government Policy

The purpose of this section is to provide a selection of statements on external affairs by Ministers of the Crown or by their parliamentary assistants. It is not designed to provide a complete coverage of debates on external affairs taking place during the month.

Canada-U.S. Air Relations

Lease to United States Air Force at Goose Bay

On December 16, the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. W. F. Harris, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, opened the deliberations of the House of Commons with the following statement:

I beg leave to table copies of notes exchanged by the Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs and the United States Ambassador on December 5. The notes constitute a lease to the United States of certain parcels of land within the Royal Canadian Air Force station at Goose Bay in the Province of Newfoundland. The lease, which is to enable the United States Air Force to replace wartime construction and to construct some additional facilities, involves approximately 7,000 acres of land which is less than ten per cent of the area of the base. The field will continue to be under the over-all command of the RCAF.

Goose Bay airport was built by Canada in 1942 — before Newfoundland entered Confederation — as a stepping-stone along the North Atlantic and Arctic airways. During the war thousands of aircraft put down there on ferry flights from the United States and Canada to Europe. Since the war Goose Bay has been used by the RCAF and the United States Air Force to support certain northern weather stations, and it has served also as a centre for search and rescue operations in the area.

In view of the increased international tension during the last three years, the RCAF and United States Air Force facilities at Goose Bay have been considerably expanded. The base is, in effect, a joint defence installation, and is being used by both air forces for the co-operative defence of North America. Its use by both countries is essential for the fulfilment of their responsibilities under the North Atlantic Treaty.

The lease is for a period of 20 years, with the proviso that any United States request for an extension will be considered by Canada in the light of the common defence interests of Canada and the United States.

When the lease has expired, all buildings on the leased area will become the property of Canada, but removable improvements may be taken away by the United States Air Force.

Flights Over Canada by U.S. Military Aircraft

On December 1, in response to a question by Mr. M. J. Coldwell (Rosetown-Biggan, CCF) as to the authority under which aircraft of the United States might cross the Canadian border to investigate unidentified planes flying over Canadian territory, Mr. Brooke Claxton, Minister of National Defence and Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs, replied:

... The defence of North America must be regarded as a single operation, and, in consequence of recommendations of the Permanent Joint Board, an arrangement has been worked out related to the defence of North America against attack. The important element in this arrangement is that air defence identification zones have been set up along both sides of the international border and along both coasts. Civil aeronautical regulations require that any aircraft operating in these zones should file flight plans.