

of Commons in the critical years 1936-39, is instructive. In 1936 foreign affairs were debated on two separate occasions in the House totalling six hours in the session February to June; in 1937 on three days - a total of  $9\frac{1}{2}$  hours from January to April; in 1938 twice, making a period of  $7\frac{1}{2}$  hours in the session from January to July; and in 1939 three days (representing a span of 18 hours) were set aside to their discussion for the first session January to June. These times do not include debates regarding defence or questions of foreign policy [i.e. reviews of the world situation] in the House. (1)

R. Barry Farrel painted a somewhat brighter picture in 1947 and 1948:

Legislative bodies provide some external controls on those who plan Canadian foreign policies. The most important bodies are the House of Commons and the House of Commons Committee on External Affairs. The concern of the House of Commons with foreign relations has increased steadily in the past fifteen years. A few years ago a Member of Parliament remarked that at the time of one of the world's great crises, in 1936, the House devoted twenty-seven minutes to external affairs and over eight hours to a tariff on asparagus. In the 1948 session of Parliament, discussions of international problems fill about five hundred and fifty pages of House of Commons Hansard and this count does not include references to foreign affairs in the debate in reply to the speech from the throne. As a matter of fact before 1947 full-dress debates on foreign policy were infrequent; foreign affairs came to the attention of the House largely in debates on treaties and other international obligations. Department of External Affairs estimates were commonly presented late in the session when time for discussion was short. In 1947 a general debate on foreign policy took place on July 4. This was preceded by a short statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In 1948 the general debate came much earlier, on April 29, and extended for four days. The Minister's statement was longer and far more thorough. Eighteen members participated in the 1947 debate while thirty spoke in 1948.

(1) Nicholas Mansergh: Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs 1931-39. p. 120n.