

External Affairs

Coming now to the second part of my remarks, it seems strange to me that Canada has no diplomatic relations with the Vatican state, where all important countries feel that they need a spokesman, because the Vatican has long been a crossroads of international influences, because of the international influence of its head, whose authority is both civil and religious.

The great objection made to this representation generally originates with people who are unable to distinguish between the civil and religious aspects of a state which nevertheless has great influence and has done its share in the work for peace throughout the world.

A large number of countries, among which are some of the most influential and least Catholic of all, such as the United Kingdom, Japan and Turkey, maintain diplomatic representatives at the Vatican. I have not heard it said that this has been prejudicial to them or contrary to their interests since they have made no move to withdraw them.

For instance when a British ambassador presents his credentials to the chief of state of the Vatican, these letters are issued under the Great Seal of Her Majesty the Queen of England, head of the Established Church of England, but also sovereign of a temporal state called the United Kingdom, to His Majesty the King of the Vatican state, head of the Catholic Church as well as of a temporal state called the Vatican. I do not think that such an exchange of diplomatic representatives between two sovereigns, who are at one and the same time temporal and spiritual rulers, has led to any worsening of the relations between themselves or their respective states since, on both sides, this representation has been quite voluntarily maintained.

Therefore, I hope that the day will come when all Canadians, regardless of their religious convictions, will consider this matter objectively, so that our country may exchange diplomatic representatives with the Vatican. And I am sure that no Canadian of the Catholic faith would even be opposed to the nomination of a representative of another religious faith, since it will be a case of naming a representative to a temporal state as such and not to a religious leader.

I am one of those who believe that cultural differences have nothing to do with Canada's participation in the organization of American states, no more than religious antagonisms, in the matter of naming an ambassador to the Vatican. So I believe that Canada, by filling these two gaps, would make a great step forward in the international field.

Mr. Speaker: Will the hon. member for Roberval adjourn the debate, or has he finished his speech?

Mr. Villeneuve: I have finished my speech, Mr. Speaker.

(Text):

On motion of Mr. Winch the debate was adjourned.

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Harris: Tomorrow we shall continue this debate and when it is completed take the Criminal Code, with this reservation, that there will be a slight alteration in the sequence in which we take the remaining items so that the sections dealing with treason will be reached last rather than second last.

Mr. Knowles: Will the second last, then, be the sections having to do with mischief and sabotage?

Mr. Harris: I understood those were the last sections, and that they are just reversed.

At ten o'clock the house adjourned, without question put, pursuant to standing order.