

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

done, believing that the people of Canada are entitled to an answer to a question of this type.

It is, of course, most important that the government should be able to make its views known to the governments of other nations. Canada must be regarded as the oddest nation in the world if it uses the type of approach mentioned by the Secretary of State for External Affairs to convey information to other nations. I read in one of the dictionaries that an introverted government is one which is comparatively indifferent to its social relations and responsibilities. I say that on this basis the present government is the most introverted we have ever had.

Do ministers really believe that the best way of conveying Canada's position to other nations is by making a statement in the House and expecting representatives of governments sitting in the galleries to convey the information back to their own countries? In my opinion such a system represents a complete breakdown of communications between Canada and the rest of the world. Canada could be a leader among nations, but with the kind of approach being taken by hon. gentlemen opposite, how can we be a leader even of ourselves? When ministers make their announcements just before the question period, are we supposed to look up to the galleries and say, "There they sit, the representatives of other governments"?

If we want the people of this nation to believe we have a credible and democratic government, let us make our representations in a formal way, and when questions are asked in an attempt to find out whether representations have been made to one government or another, let us not be contemptuous or facetious in any answer which may be given. I am sure those who read *Hansard* anywhere from grade four onward are beginning to wonder what is going on in the House of Commons. It is impossible for us to retain any sanity in this world if this is the type of approach we are taking.

On May 5, the same day Mr. Speaker suggested there were other ways open to me of handling this inquiry, I put the following questions on the Order Paper:

1. Does the government consider it has conveyed the government's official position to other governments of the world by a cabinet minister or the Prime Minister making a statement or answering a question in the House of Commons and, if not, what is the usual method of conveying Canada's position to other governments?

2. Has Canada directly expressed her disapproval to the United States government of the American invasion of Cambodia?

3. Does Canada intend making her official views known to the United States and to the citizens of Canada?

All I ask at this time is whether the statement made in this House represents the official position of the government. Incidentally, I posted this question on May 5 and it has not yet been answered. If this is how we are treated by the government of the day, how can we expect the people to believe we have a democratic system? Surely, the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Macdonald) is in a position to answer those three questions this evening. Regardless of what our official position might be, he can tell us the means by which we convey that official position to the governments of other nations. Is it done through the United Nations? Is it done through our ambassadors? There must be an answer to this question. It should not have taken nine days to produce it. A reply to the questions I posed is now overdue.

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of my colleague, the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Sharp), may I say that the immediate and most obvious answer to the hon. member is that there is a whole range of ways in which governments communicate with each other and make their views known. They range from formal diplomatic communications to informal exchanges between accredited representatives either at the United Nations or in the various states concerned.

Surely, though, there could be no more authoritative and public channel through which a government can express its views on any subject than through the Parliament of Canada. I am surprised that the hon. member should take exception to the government communicating its views on the particular matter in question to the people of the world, as it does in connection with other questions of domestic and foreign policy, through the Parliament of Canada. Surely, there could be no better channel. There is certainly no channel which this government is more prepared to respect than that of the House of Commons. The hon. member seems to take exception to this. I find it an extraordinary position for him to take, but perhaps it explains why his hon. friends have chosen not to appoint him to the External Affairs Committee.