

ence to its chief, Mr. Ian Imrie, and Miss Jean Macpherson.

The second group to which we should pay tribute is the Parliamentary Centre, who were responsible for organizing the brief, and preparing us for discussions with our American confrères. I must say that for the excellent briefing we received our thanks are more than due to the many capable people, drawn from the different departments of government, who came and spoke to us. This briefing—which was extensive and very good in my case, and I am sure that applies to other senators—broadened our understanding on many of the problems of the present time that prove difficult to solve so far as our country is concerned.

Two years ago in Washington, energy seemed to be the big problem before this interparliamentary group. The Assistant Under-Secretary of State for energy problems, Mr. Philip Trezyse, appeared and explained his point of view. This, as His Honour the Speaker has said, did create a precedent because it was the first time that a non-parliamentary person appeared before this group.

Honourable senators, you will recall that in August 1971, when President Nixon imposed the 10 per cent surcharge and introduced the DISC program, we were faced with considerable difficulties. Following that introduction, a special ad hoc meeting was held in Washington on November 11, at the request of the Canadians. At that meeting the Americans received us graciously, as usual. We had the opportunity of bringing to their attention the reasons why we thought the 10 per cent surcharge and the DISC program should not apply to this country. I should note, in passing, that the Americans also have their problems in the matter of balance of payments and the need for energy resources.

To my way of thinking, communication is the name of the game. For example, the Honourable Jean-Luc Pepin, Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, spoke to the joint group for over one hour in the Railway Committee Room on Canada's position on the trade negotiations which, up to the moment, have not been concluded. He spoke directly to the American delegates in plain terms. He explained the Canadian attitude, and made a decided impression on them. They found that he was not just a functionary, that he knew whereof he was speaking. I think he convinced a great many of them. In any event, this was a direct approach, and is one more step in the recognition of the general principle that when things get

rough our interparliamentary group is there for special as well as annual meetings.

As honourable senators know, it was during January 1959 that the present Governor General, the Right Honourable Roland Michener, and Senator Aiken of Vermont started the Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group. During thirteen years the group has shown great ability in adapting itself to the changing requirements on both sides of the border. Therefore, my conclusion is that the Canada-United States group offers an important means of direct communication between members of the Canadian Parliament and members of the United States Congress—an advantage few other countries, if any, enjoy. The group can be convened quickly and used for dealing with special problems on either side of the border.

Is it not better to be on good terms with our cousins and neighbours to the south, than to worry about events in outer Mongolia? The Canada-United States Interparliamentary Group has proved its worth. Long may it flourish.

Hon. Mr. Martin: Honourable senators, may I ask Senator Macnaughton a question? He said that at the last meeting in Ottawa, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce spoke to the delegates. At the meeting in November, did any member of the American government appear before the committee, or has it been a practice at any other meeting for members of either government to appear?

Hon. Mr. Macnaughton: No, this is something entirely new. At the November meeting I do not remember any outside member of the Government of the United States appearing before our committee, nor do I remember any member of the American civil service appearing. We had but one day in Washington and it was completely utilized by the delegates, both American and Canadian. I felt that the fact that Mr. Pepin came was unique. It was a precedent. I do not say it should be followed on every occasion, but when there are such emergencies what better can you do than have such a person as the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce speak with authority and knowledge on a subject he knows so well, and with his persuasive qualities really impressing our American friends?

On motion of Hon. Mr. Choquette, for Hon. Mr. Beaubien, debate adjourned.

The Senate adjourned until tomorrow at 2 p.m.