

an extensive and valuable report on that subject.

The influence of these studies on Government policy is a longer story than I can tell you tonight. I can say that every report has contributed significantly to decision-making in the relevant policy area. Even when the Government has been unwilling to adopt particular recommendations, that has not been for lack of serious and detailed attention. Under the new House of Commons rules the government also is required to make a "comprehensive response" to any SCEAND report which calls for one.

Another important function of parliamentarians -- and one yet to be exploited fully -- is their role in relationships with their foreign counterparts. I hope you can pay some attention to that in your discussions. Through the network of parliamentary associations and friendship groups, Members cover most of the foreign bases important to Canada -- the USA, the EC, France, Japan, NATO, the Commonwealth and la francophonie.

A particularly important example is the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group. It is invaluable to us at a time when Congress is playing such a prominent role in U.S. foreign and domestic policy. The semi-annual meetings of the group are sessions of frank talk on subjects of clear importance, for example, Canadian gas export prices, U.S. Buy American legislation, the Garrison Diversion, and defence plans. Consciousness is raised, misunderstandings are dispelled, and intentions are clarified in a manner possible only between elected representatives. These meetings are a major complement to the normal diplomatic relations and negotiations between the two countries.

The Future

Well, are there any ways by which the role of Parliament and parliamentarians can be enhanced? Obviously the more that Members of Parliament and Senators can devote themselves to international questions the more enlightened the process will be. The proportion of energy expended on partisan wrangling might also be looked at by all sides. For the Government's part, I accept that without ministerial encouragement parliamentarians cannot contribute fully to Canada's international relations.

We will continue our efforts to improve the provision of information and services to members. Briefings on many subjects routinely are given to individual parliamentarians, caucus groups, and to various parliamentary delegations. Perhaps the Government can do more to meet parliamentary