

External Affairs

day. The record shows that Canada was represented at a total of 168 conferences and meetings during 1950.

I am sure that a great many of them were very important. I know that many of them will have a profound effect upon the future of this country and the general attempts to establish a sound basis for collective action. On the other hand, I think that an examination of the meetings shown as having been attended by representatives of the government suggests that at a time like this, when it is so important to economize in every way, we should consider exactly what value is obtained from some of these conferences, and also whether some of them are meetings which should be attended at all by government representatives.

It is not enough to say that only one or two people attended these conferences in some cases, and that in others they travelled fairly short distances. In other cases many people attended conferences and they travelled very great distances. These conferences were not all conferences which can easily be recognized as having any real importance at this time. No matter how short or long the trip may be, no matter how many may attend, it is the principle that is important, the example that it offers to the people of Canada as to the real necessity for economy; and the fact remains that every saving that can be effected should be made. It is in that light that I raise some question whether in such times as these we should be sending a government representative to the international congress of chocolate and cocoa manufacturers at Lausanne, to a meeting of the directing council and sanitary conference of the Pan-American bureau in the Dominican Republic, to the society of vertebrate palaeontology and the palaeontological society at Washington, to the third assembly of the world federation of mental health, to the third assembly of the world congress on cardiology, or to the meeting in Paris to discuss the problems of foot and mouth disease.

That is only to mention a few of the conferences dealing with subjects which it would seem are perhaps more a matter of concern for the professional organizations related to these activities and business organizations, or in the case of health meetings dealing with specified subjects which are under the provincial governments they might well be the responsibility of those authorities. I am sure that a careful examination of this report will suggest many places where a distinction should be drawn between the function of government and the

function of the professional organizations and businesses concerned.

I want to make it perfectly clear that I am not questioning the standing or qualification of those who were sent. In the case, for instance, of the conference on cardiology, one of the recognized leaders in cardiology on this continent was sent. In the case of mental health a thoroughly competent representative was there. In other cases, the same observation is equally true. I am suggesting that the habit of sending government representation to every conference with the idea that, indirectly and in some uncertain way, some benefit may accrue is not in keeping with the necessity for economy, and does ignore the fact that the great professional organizations dealing with subjects of this kind, and business organizations interested in such problems as the manufacture of chocolate and things of that kind, will be fairly certain to see that they are appropriately represented at such gatherings.

Then I come to a matter referred to on page 49 of the department's report. In this case I am referring to something which has been a subject of discussion for some time, and which I think does call for a comprehensive, clear and definitive statement by the Secretary of State for External Affairs. The report I mentioned refers to the shortwave broadcasts of the international service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. I have no doubt whatever that this service has a useful place in the struggle for men's minds which is taking place in the world today. On the other hand, it should be remembered that, quite apart from other activities of this nature, the specific provision for international shortwave broadcasting in the estimates amounts to \$1,928,600. That in itself, even in these days of huge expenditures, is not an insignificant sum. What I am even more concerned about is the measure of supervision that is being exercised by the Department of External Affairs over this particular branch of the broadcasting activities of this country. There has been a considerable amount of criticism of some of these broadcasts. Naturally, it is not an easy subject for the minister or his department to deal with. The broadcasts in fourteen different languages, many of which are particularly directed to the countries behind the iron curtain, are naturally difficult to supervise and check because of the language difficulty, if for no other reason.

I do not minimize for a moment the difficulty of the minister and his officials in supervising this particular activity. On the other hand, I do think we should have much more information concerning the specific