

sort of running account of the details of those negotiations as they are going on. We should of course make quite clear in advance the principles which guide us in these discussions. We should give the details of the negotiations when we can, and we should always give the result of these negotiations to the public. I think we do try to do that,

In my review today I will not devote much of my time, indeed possibly any of my time, to Commonwealth affairs--not because I do not appreciate their importance, but because I attempted to discuss them in relation to the Commonwealth conference at Colombo. Nor do I intend to devote very much of my time to Far Eastern affairs, for the same reason. But I cannot let this occasion pass without answering, or attempting to answer, one or two questions which were asked me last night by the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green), which deal with the Far East.

In respect to one of these questions I think the hon. member misunderstood what I tried to say last week in the discussion on this subject. Last night, in referring to the Commonwealth consultative committee, he said that I had made no statement as to whether or not we would join that committee. But I hoped that I had made it clear the other day that if and when an invitation comes from the Australian government--I think we have not received it yet--to join the meeting in Canberra, which will be devoted to this subject, we shall be very glad indeed to accept it and be represented at the meeting or on the committee if one is set up at that time.

The hon. member was also critical of our lack of leadership in regard to a Pacific pact. I attempted to deal with that matter in my statement last November 16 on the external affairs estimates. I pointed out at that time that the situation in the Pacific in regard to a regional pact of this kind was certainly not the same as the situation in the Atlantic, which had made desirable and necessary, the signing of the North Atlantic Pact. My view in that regard was not weakened, but indeed was confirmed by the recent Commonwealth meeting at Colombo. If we had taken the lead in regard to this matter--we should not of course hesitate to take leadership when the occasion demands it--we would have found that at least two of the countries most directly concerned with regional security in the Pacific, namely, the United Kingdom and India, would not have been able to support our lead, or at this time support the idea of a Pacific regional pact. Also we knew then, as we know now, that the United States would not be able to participate at this time in negotiations leading up to that kind of pact. One reason for that attitude on the part of the United States and the United Kingdom is no doubt the fact that a conference for this purpose, Mr. Chairman, would certainly have to include China and the U.S.S.R., if they were willing to accept the invitation to participate. It would be somewhat embarrassing to issue an invitation to China at this moment to a meeting of that kind. If the invitation were being issued by the government of the United Kingdom it might be addressed to a different post office than that to which it would be directed if it were to be issued by the government of the United States. And if it were being issued by the government of Canada it might be addressed to a different post office in the future than that to which it would be directed if we issued the invitation now. Therefore there are obviously practical difficulties in the way of calling a Pacific conference to draw up a Pacific regional pact.

When I say that, I do not wish to have it understood that the government is opposed to the idea of a regional pact for the Pacific. If and when the circumstances should make it desirable, we