

Supply—External Affairs

the government on the mainland of China but because I think that that would be a rash and ill-advised action, even for the sake of overthrowing that government, if that were itself a desirable objective.

The hon. member for Winnipeg North did bring up a lot of interesting points and interesting questions in his speech. He was inclined to be critical about something I said this afternoon, in that I was negative and not positive enough; that while I emphasized that we must be clear, Mr. Chairman, on what we are trying to prevent, I said very little about what we are trying to do. If he will recall the context of those remarks when I talked about the desirability of clarity in respect of what we were trying to prevent, he will see I was thinking about the defence security, military security organizations, and not about the prevention of communism as a doctrine, as a social and economic doctrine. On more than one occasion in this house, and I did mention it in passing this afternoon, I have emphasized that it is far more important for the prevention of communism itself—I am not now referring merely to military aggression—to have a positive policy than merely a negative one. If he took anything from my remarks this afternoon indicating I had departed from that view I assure him that he was mistaken.

That, Mr. Chairman, is all I have to say at this time. No doubt other matters will come up in the consideration of other items of the estimates, and I shall be glad to do my best to deal with those questions as they arise.

Item agreed to.

87. Representation abroad—construction, acquisition or improvement of buildings, works, land, new equipment and furnishings, and to the extent that blocked funds are available for these expenditures to provide for payment from these foreign currencies owned by Canada and provided only for governmental or other limited purposes, \$1,945,480.

Mr. Green: This item deals with construction, acquisition and improvement of buildings, works, lands and so on, abroad. There is a recommendation of the standing committee on external affairs which reads as follows:

Your committee approves of the exploratory negotiations being carried on between the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Public Works concerning the liaison to be established between these departments as to the purchase of properties, the erection and maintenance of buildings occupied by the department.

That was discussed in the committee at the time the minister was abroad. It would be helpful if we could have his comments on the recommendation. As he knows, the present situation is that his own department, which is in no sense a building department,

[Mr. Pearson.]

is carrying on most of this work; whereas in our governmental structure we have a Department of Public Works, which is now supposed to be much more efficient than it was before and thoroughly capable of handling all public construction. It does seem to me that this is one case where it could be called in.

We have had examples of tremendous sums of money being used for construction of buildings abroad. We have the situation in Rome where about \$186,000 has been spent on a site in one of the most expensive portions of the city, and there are potential plans of the minister's department for the erection of an embassy to house one ambassador and his family costing \$325,000, and equipment, furniture and so on for that same embassy to cost \$75,000, making a total of about \$600,000 for this one embassy.

I believe if the Department of Public Works were called in to do work of this kind the result might be a big saving for the taxpayers of Canada. The embassy in Rome is only one of several which are costing this country a great deal, and just in the last few days we have had a proposal made by one of the minister's representatives abroad, the consul general in New York, that private Canadians subscribe \$100,000 apiece to build a Canada House in New York for a total cost of about \$10 million, and that the hope is that the government will take that over and there is an assurance that it will not lose money.

There we have a plan which would mean that the Canadian government would be going into the office building business in a foreign country to the extent of \$10 million and be subject to all the changes and economic conditions in that area. In the committee of external affairs the acting deputy minister, I think it was, intimated that they knew nothing about such a plan and in any event the government was not committed to it.

But we have suggestions being made and these construction projects always seem to be costing millions of dollars. We have another big building going up in Washington to house the Department of National Defence and defence construction and to accommodate 150 people. That office building is to cost \$2 million when it is erected in a swank part of that city.

I would like to have the minister's comments on the policy of his department, particularly with regard to turning these construction jobs over to the Department of Public Works.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, in reply to what the hon. gentleman has just said I would like to assure him and the house that