

EVIDENCE

FRIDAY, December 6, 1957
10 A.M.

The CHAIRMAN: The committee will please come to order. We shall now proceed with the business in hand. This morning, gentlemen, the order of business is item 94, departmental administration. Mr. Leger has provided us with a statement and as we are rushed his suggestion—and I think it is a good one—is that we should just take a few minutes and read it. We can read it much quicker than anyone could read it out to the group. So we shall take about 15 minutes and read it and proceed with the meeting if that is agreeable to the committee.

Mr. KNOWLES (*Winnipeg North Centre*): The statement will be printed in the record just as if it had been read?

The CHAIRMAN: Yes.

Mr. JULES LEGER (*Under Secretary of State for External Affairs*): Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, I welcome this opportunity to discuss with you some significant aspects of the administration of the Department of External Affairs suggested by our departmental estimates for 1957-1958.

As in previous years each member of the committee has been given a financial statistical table prepared in two parts. The first compares our 1957-58 proposed estimates with those of 1956-57, and the second part is made up of appendices comparing expenditures for 1955-56 and for 1956-57 with the estimates of 1956-57 and those now being presented for 1957-58.

In terms of the establishment of new posts abroad the Department of External Affairs has not expanded to any great extent during the years 1955 and 1956. This is not, however, the only measure of our activities. We have used this period not only to consolidate the rather rapid expansion which took place during several years immediately preceding 1955 but we have, during these two years, taken on additional responsibilities and considerably enlarged the scope of our functions in various areas.

In a period when new posts are being opened abroad, it is difficult to keep abreast of the growth in terms of administration, such as trained personnel, adequate physical facilities, premises, furniture and furnishings, security arrangements and communications. These last two years have given us a much-needed opportunity to consolidate our administrative position and, in so doing, to increase the efficiency of our operations. Our international responsibilities and the simple fact that the world community is gaining new members every year, among them new members of the commonwealth and new members of the United Nations, will make it almost inevitable that we must open new posts abroad in order to discharge our commitments. The growing importance of Asia and the Middle East makes it desirable and necessary for us to give priority to these regions.

The estimates of the department could be examined from two different but complementary angles; first, in relation to the specific tasks which it has to perform and, second, in relation to the personnel and funds which it requires to that end. In our present context the emphasis is naturally placed on the latter approach.