

the language of the various countries to which they may be accredited?" Mr. L.B. Pearson, then Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, was able to give a reassuring reply:

We are rather fortunate in respect to the ability of our representatives abroad to speak the language of the country to which they are accredited. I think this is a very important advantage. In South America our ambassador in the Argentine is fluent in Spanish and makes all his speeches in Spanish. That is Mr. Chipman. Our Ambassador to Brazil is fluent in Portuguese. He speaks it like a native. Our Ambassador to Peru is as fluent in Spanish almost as he is in English. Our Ambassador to Chile has only reached there recently and he is working very hard at Spanish. He will be able to conduct business in Spanish very shortly. Our Ambassador-designate to Mexico will be able to conduct affairs in Spanish by the time he gets there.

Our representative in Tokyo, we have not an embassy or legation there but we have a representative, is one of the outstanding Japanese scholars on this continent. He speaks Japanese colloquially. He is Mr. Herbert Norman. Our Chargé d'Affaires in the U.S.S.R. is fluent in Russian and has occasionally acted as interpreter between the Russian Foreign Office people and British and American people. . .

(As regards the departmental staff other than the Heads of Mission): We give instructions to those people to learn the language of the country to which they are going as quickly as possible. We try to give them as much notice as possible of the country to which they are going so that they will be able to learn the language. We assume, of course, that they are all able to speak French as well as English in any post. (1)

The Department adopted the British practice of agreeing, in approved cases, to reimburse the officers for the costs of their tuition in foreign languages, and, after they had passed certain qualifying tests (usually the British tests), to grant them an extra language allowance or bonus during the period of their posting in the

(1) Minutes of Select Standing Committee on External Affairs, May 30, 1947, p.220.