



1951-52-53.

THE PARLIAMENT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA.

SECOND REPORT

from the

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS

relating to

THE COMMITTEE'S ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONS.

PERSONNEL OF COMMITTEE.

Chairman:

Senator J.G. Gorton.

Vice-Chairman:

Senator E.B. Maher.

Members-

Senator J.A. McCallum.

Senator R.H. Wordsworth, C.B., C.B.E.

W.D. Bostock, Esq., C.B., D.S.O., O.B.E., M.P.

D.A. Cameron, Esq., O.B.E., M.P.

A.R. Downer, Esq., M.P.

The Hon. D.H. Drummond, M.P.

F.M. Osborne, Esq., D.S.C., M.P.

H.S. Robertson, Esq., M.P.

W.C. Wentworth, Esq., M.P.

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS.

SECOND REPORT.

To -

The Rt. Hon. R.G. Menzies, C.H., Q.C., M.P.,
Prime Minister and Acting Minister for External
Affairs,
Parliament House,
CANBERRA.

Sir,

The Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs has the honour to present its Second Report.

2. The purposes of this Report are, firstly, to review and summarize the activities of the Committee since its appointment in February, 1952, and secondly, to make a recommendation with respect to an extension of the Committee's functions.

Activities of the Committee.

3. Since its appointment the Committee has held 30 sittings - 28 at Canberra and two at Melbourne.

4. Pursuant to the terms of the Resolution of the Houses appointing the Committee, all sittings have been held in camera. All Members of the Committee have made declarations that they will at all times to the best of their judgment perform their duties as Members of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and that they will not, directly or indirectly, reveal such secret or confidential information as may be imparted to the Committee, while that information remains so classified.

5. Three hundred and eighty-seven (387) Papers have been circulated to Members of the Committee. These Papers include Departmental reports on all current events of importance, such as regular reviews of Soviet policy, and developments in South East Asia and their consequences. In addition to such reports, Members of the Committee receive copies of despatches from Australia's representatives overseas.

2.

6. The Minister for External Affairs (Mr. Casey) has attended a number of sittings, when he has given to the Committee regular reviews of foreign affairs and the Government's policy in relation thereto. The Committee takes this opportunity of expressing its appreciation of the Minister's keen interest in the work of the Committee and his willingness to make information available to Members.

7. With the concurrence of the Minister, a number of senior officers of the Department of External Affairs, including the Secretary (Mr. A.S. Watt), has addressed the Committee on a variety of important subjects. The officers have been most helpful.

8. In addition, the following persons have attended sittings of the Committee -

Lord Lindsay of Birker, Senior Research Fellow in the Department of International Relations, Australian National University.

Dr. Chen Tai Chu, Charge d'Affaires for China.

Professor Kluckhohn, Director of the Russian Research Institute, Harvard.

The Rt. Hon. Viscount Bruce of Melbourne, a Member of the House of Lords and a former Prime Minister of Australia.

Colonel C.H. Finlay, Director of Military Intelligence.

Professor M.L. Oliphant, Director of the Research School of Physical Sciences, Australian National University.

His Excellency M. Jean Letourneau, French Minister for relations with the Associated States of Indo-China.

Professor E.W. Titterton, Professor of Nuclear Physics at the Australian National University.

Mr. Peter Storrs, former Personal Assistant to the Secretary-General of the Organization for European Economic Co-operation.

The Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs (Mr. Luns).

Major-General W.J. Cawthorn, Director of the Joint Intelligence Bureau.

Mr. M.C. Cormack, former Senator for Victoria.

4.

stimulate a healthy public interest in the consideration of international affairs and Australia's participation therein.

15. It is recommended, therefore, that paragraph 4 (c) of the Resolution of the Houses constituting the Committee, which reads -

"4 (c) the Committee and its sub-committees will sit in camera and their proceedings shall be secret" -

be amended by adding at the end thereof the words ", unless the Minister, at the request of the Committee, directs otherwise".

Opposition representation on the Committee.

16. The Committee regrets that the Opposition has not accepted offers by the Government to be represented on the Foreign Affairs Committee. Present Members of the Committee would welcome the appointment of Opposition Members.

17. An all-Party Committee could, we think, make a real contribution to the development of continuity of policy with respect to Australia's part in the field of foreign affairs.

Presentation of Report to Parliament.

18. The Committee recommends that this Report be tabled in both Houses of the Parliament in order that Senators and Members may be informed of the activities of the Committee since its appointment.

J.G. GORTON

Chairman.

Canberra,

1st October, 1953.

ANNEX.

Resolution of the Houses appointing the Joint
Committee on Foreign Affairs. X

- (1) That a Joint Committee be appointed to consider such matters concerning foreign affairs as are referred to it by the Minister for External Affairs.
- (2) (a) That twelve Members of the House of Representatives be appointed to serve on such Committee;

(b) That the persons appointed for the time being to serve on the Committee shall constitute the Committee notwithstanding any failure by the Senate or the House of Representatives to appoint the full number of Senators or Members referred to in these resolutions.
- (3) That the Minister for External Affairs shall make available to the Committee information within such categories or on such conditions as he may consider desirable.
- (4) That, notwithstanding anything contained in the Standing Orders -
 - (a) the Committee have power to appoint sub-committees consisting of four or more of its members; and to refer to any such sub-committee any of the matters which the Committee is empowered to examine;
 - (b) the Committee or any sub-committee have power to sit during any adjournment of the Parliament and during the sittings of either House of the Parliament;
 - (c) the Committee and its sub-committees will sit in camera and their proceedings shall be secret;
 - (d) (i) one-third of the number of members appointed to the Committee for the time being constitute a quorum of the Committee, save that where the number of members is not divisible by three without remainder the quorum shall be the number next higher than one-third of the number of members for the time being;

(ii) three members of a sub-committee constitute a quorum of that sub-committee.
 - (e) the Committee shall, for considerations of national security, in all cases forward its reports to the Minister for External Affairs, but on every occasion when the Committee forwards a report to the Minister, it shall inform the Parliament that it has so reported;
 - (f) the Committee shall have no power to send for persons, papers or records without the concurrence of the Minister for External Affairs and all evidence submitted to the Committee shall be regarded as confidential to the Committee; and
 - (g) a message be sent to the Senate requesting its concurrence and asking that seven members of the Senate be appointed to serve on such Committee.

X The Resolution, as modified, was finally agreed to by the Senate on 27th February, 1952, and by the House of Representatives on 28th February, 1952.