

became a British subject and this is why he lost his Canadian citizenship.

Then, on page 2336, commenting on the minister's statement, I said:

An hour or so ago I asked the minister a three part question regarding foreign decorations. I received a passable answer to the first of the three questions. I was told that Lord Thomson of Fleet, who was decorated by the Queen of Canada, had chosen to become a British subject. I also asked a question as to what happened in the case of Premier Lesage of Quebec who accepted the Order of the Phoenix from the King of Greece. Did Premier Lesage become a citizen of Greece?

To which the minister answered: "Not that I know of."

That interchange occurred on March 7. I wrote a letter to the minister under date of April 6. I will read it into the record so that the country may know the position the cabinet is taking on the question of titles and foreign decorations.

Ottawa, April 6th, 1966

Hon. Jean Marchand,  
Minister of Citizenship  
and Immigration,  
Ottawa, Ontario.  
Dear Sir:

On Monday, March 7th, when your estimates were before the committee, I asked some questions regarding Lord Thomson of Fleet, Premier Lesage of the province of Quebec and an unnamed friend of mine. You will find comments on this on pages 2320, 2321, 2328 and 2336 of the House of Commons *Hansard* for March 7th. I am very appreciative of your statement on page 2336 that Premier Lesage of Quebec has not become a citizen of Greece.

As I pointed out in my questions, I am intensely interested in ascertaining how Lord Thomson of Fleet lost his Canadian citizenship. Did he write a letter to the Canadian government advising them that he was now a British subject (which I always understood a Canadian citizen to be) or did the Canadian government write Lord Thomson a letter?

It is amazing to me that you advised that Premier Lesage is not a citizen of Greece, but is still allowed to hold the Order of the Phoenix. This is the highest honour available in Greece to a civilian citizen of a foreign country.

In the case of my friend who has been asked to accept a very high decoration from the country in which he was born, I am concerned lest he lose his Canadian citizenship if he accepts the honour.

A year or two ago, Hon. Walter Gordon honoured his friend, Mr. Grittani, of Toronto by having him appointed to some Board of Directors connected with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. This man is of Italian descent. During the last World War, the father, Mr. Grittani Sr., was interned by the Canadian Government along with Mr. Franceschini. The authorities told Mr. Grittani Sr., that one of the proofs they had that he was an enemy alien was the fact that he had been decorated by Il Duce, Benito Mussolini.

Since Mr. Grittani Sr., was interned on the grounds he had accepted a foreign Government's

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decoration, my close friend is adverse to accepting this proffered decoration until he is assured that he will not lose his Canadian citizenship now or in the future.

Would you be kind enough to advise me as to whether or not my friend, a naturalized Canadian citizen, can accept this foreign decoration without losing his Canadian citizenship in the same manner as Premier Lesage has been allowed to accept the Greek decoration and still retain his Canadian citizenship?

A prompt ruling on this matter will be much appreciated as the foreign government will make the presentation whenever they are advised that the recipient is willing to accept it.

Yours sincerely,

R. B. Cowan, M.P.

In reply I received a most interesting letter dated April 20, 1966—two weeks later. It reads as follows:

Minister of Citizenship  
and Immigration  
Ottawa 2,  
April 20, 1966

R. B. Cowan, Esq., M.P.,  
House of Commons,  
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Cowan:

I have your letter of April 6th regarding Lord Thomson of Fleet and the general question of acceptance of foreign decorations by Canadians.

When I replied to your question in the house regarding Lord Thomson, I indicated that he lost his Canadian citizenship by voluntarily becoming a "British subject". I must confess I was technically incorrect because I should have used the term "a citizen of the United Kingdom and Colonies". The status of a British subject is enjoyed by citizens of commonwealth countries in addition to their respective citizenships. Therefore, as a Canadian, Roy Thomson was also a British subject and although under the Canadian Citizenship Act he ceased to be a Canadian by acquisition of United Kingdom citizenship, he remained a British subject under our act.

So far as I am aware, Lord Thomson never formally notified my department of his change in status. But with the announcement of his elevation to the peerage it was ascertained from the United Kingdom authorities that he had applied for and become a United Kingdom citizen on June 5, 1963, at which time he ceased to be a Canadian. This is because Section 15(1) of the Canadian Citizenship Act provides as follows:

"A Canadian citizen, who, when outside of Canada and not under a disability, by any voluntary and formal act other than marriage, acquires the nationality or citizenship of a country other than Canada, thereupon ceases to be a Canadian citizen."

The law operated automatically in this case. Lord Thomson, therefore, was not a Canadian citizen when he accepted his peerage.

Here is the heart of the letter. This is what I should like hon. members to note:

The Canadian Citizenship Act does not provide for loss of citizenship when Canadians are honoured by other countries. This explains why Premier Lesage did not cease to be a Canadian when he