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TELEGRAM

C 284836

From THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR DOMINION AFFAIRS
To THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, CANADA

EN CLAIR

September 26, 1939.

LONDON,

CIRCULAR C.84

Circular C.84. Following is text of Statement Made by First Lord of Admiralty in House of Commons today, Begins:

The war at sea opened with some intensity. All our ships were going about the world in the ordinary way when they were set upon by lurking U-Boats carefully posted beforehand. In the first week our losses in tonnage were half the weekly losses of the month of April 1917 which was the peak year of U-Boat attack in the late war. That was a very serious proportion.

We immediately replied in three ways. First, we set in motion the convoy system. This could be very quickly done for all the out going ships but it took a fortnight to organize from the other end the convoys of homeward bound ships. This system is now in full operation--in full operation both ways. Meanwhile however, large numbers of ships which had started independently under the ordinary conditions of peace had, day after day, to run the gauntlet of the waiting U-Boats without either being armed or escorted and in consequence a serious, though I am glad to say diminishing toll was exacted. The convoy system is good and well tried defence against U-Boat attack but no one can pretend that it is a complete defence. Some degree