

## (B) WAR ORGANIZATION AND REGULATIONS

### 1. RELATIONS BETWEEN CANADIAN AND BRITISH FORCES AND COMMANDS, STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENCE, April 1, 1941.

Perhaps this would be the proper place for me to say a word in answer to what my hon. friend the member for Yale (Mr. Stirling) referred to yesterday afternoon with respect to the relations between the Canadian and British forces and the Canadian and British commands in the United Kingdom.

Let me say that, while stating perhaps the cold legal position, I want it clearly understood that it is the legal position, and that there is no necessity nor do I anticipate that there will be any necessity of our having to invoke it. There has not been the slightest difference of opinion with respect to matters of operations in which the Canadian corps or Canadian forces overseas are or may be engaged. The relationship between the Canadian and British forces and the Canadian staffs and the British staffs could not be more cordial than they have been, and the confidence which exists between them could not, I think, be greater.

Coming to the legal position, as was intimated yesterday afternoon, the Canadian troops are in the United Kingdom under the terms of what is known as the Visiting Forces (British Commonwealth) Act, 1933. That act so far as Canada is concerned is contained in chapter 21 of the statutes of 1933; and the same act, I understand, practically word for word, is on the statute book of the United Kingdom, although the sections are numbered differently.

As hon. members know, the intention of the act is to provide for the relationships existing between the so-called home forces, which in the case we are referring to are the United Kingdom forces, and visiting forces, which are the Canadian forces. Two different situations are visualized under the visiting forces act. That is to say, there is one status for the visiting forces, in which they are held to be, as the statute states, serving together with the home forces—that is, the Canadian forces are serving together with the British forces. There is another status in which the Canadian forces are said to be acting in combination with the United Kingdom forces.

Section 6, subsection 4 (a) of that statute provides for the terms of the status when they are serving together. Section 6, subsection 4 (b) provides for the status when they are serving in combination. To make