

When I saw the press report of the first editorial which appeared on the 19th, while it caused me some concern, because it did not disclose anything new, and expressed an opinion which seemed to me would cause some disturbance among the troops overseas awaiting repatriation, I did not feel that it called for action on my part.

The next day I saw a report of a second editorial in which reference was made to the matter of the repatriation policy, indicating that that policy was determined in Canada, and leaving the inference that it had been changed before and that it could be changed now. To me that editorial had definite political significance. I then asked the chief of general staff to obtain for me a report as to the publication of the two editorials.

My wishes in this respect had been anticipated, and a signal was sent to General Murchie, chief of general staff at headquarters overseas, asking for a report on the publication of these two editorials. On Friday, September 21, General Murchie cabled to General Foulkes, chief of staff in Ottawa; and I think I will read to the house the text of that cable. This is what General Murchie said:

Ref. DPR. 1762 Amsterdam edition of *Maple Leaf* followed up repatriation story and editorial of 19th September by a further editorial on 20th September entitled "To Continue" which further criticized the present system of repatriation. Both editorials written by Major J. D. MacFarlane, managing editor.

Have now received following from Simonds. Begins. Reference *Maple Leaf* editorials September 19 "On this repatriation question *Maple Leaf* reveals"—

That is the title of the first editorial.

—and 20th September, "To continue"—

The title of the second editorial.

—I pointed out to the editor, Major J. D. MacFarlane, that these contravened the policy of the *Maple Leaf* in particular reference COS. 660 of 101630B July 1945 para 2(B)—

That is the signal from which I read an extract a moment ago.

—and CGS. 365 of 181740 July 1945 para 2 and para 3 last sentence. I requested Major MacFarlane to publish editorially the other side of the controversial question raised in the editorials referred to above namely that in view of common obligations of service after reaching this theatre and DND policy as regards repatriation there was no differentiation between NRMA and volunteer soldiers of equal point scores. I further said to him that raising this issue was creating a schism between groups within the army detrimental to morale and to no useful purpose and that to present a one-sided case was bound to do much harm. He refused to accede to publication of the editorial which Col. Gilchrist and I considered necessary to give a just presentation of the case and in

[Mr. Abbott.]

principle was not willing to accept as policy that a balanced view as opposed to his own personal view must be expressed in editorial columns of the *Maple Leaf*. I have therefore ordered the removal of Major MacFarlane from the editorship and am going to arrange repatriation as early as possible to which his point score entitles him. I regret that this action should be necessary but in view of his refusal to accept the basic policy as laid down for the *Maple Leaf* I consider no other course was possible. I am issuing a statement for publication in the *Maple Leaf* explaining the action I have taken the reasons for it and presenting the side of the case which I consider was not properly presented in the subject matter discussed in the *Maple Leaf* editorials. A copy of this I will forward as soon as complete. Col. Gilchrist was present throughout interviews with MacFarlane and agrees as to issues under discussion and action taken.

Then General Murchie added:

I consider that Simonds took the only action possible under the circumstances and I will forward the statement to which he refers as soon as received.

Information requested para 1 DPR. 1762 being obtained and will forward earliest.

That signal was given to me on Friday. On Saturday afternoon I received a copy of the signal containing a copy of the statement which General Simonds had caused to be published in the *Maple Leaf*, and which he had given to the Canadian press. That has already appeared in the newspapers.

I think for the purpose of the record I should like to have it on *Hansard*; but since it has already appeared in the press perhaps the house will consent to its being taken as read, and placed on *Hansard*.

Mr. GREEN: If that is to be done, I think it would be fair to place the editorials on *Hansard* also.

Mr. ABBOTT: I should be glad to do that, but they have not been cabled to me as yet. The *Maple Leaf* is not published here. I shall be glad to see that those are placed on *Hansard* as soon as we can get them. I shall ask that they be cabled at once. I have seen only the extracts which appeared in the Canadian papers.

Mr. GREEN: I suggest that they all be placed on *Hansard* together, General Simonds' statement and the editorials.

Mr. ABBOTT: All I am talking about now is General Simonds' statement and the statements which appeared in the *Maple Leaf* which have been referred to in this morning's papers. I want it on the record here. I am trying to give a full explanation of this matter. I thought it would save time, but