

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

Speaker: The Honourable JAMES ALLISON GLEN

THURSDAY, July 18, 1940.

The house met at three o'clock.

### REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

#### BANKING AND COMMERCE—PRINTING OF PARLIAMENT

Third report of standing committee on banking and commerce.—Mr. Moore.

First report of the joint committee of both houses of parliament on printing.—Mr. Dupuis.

#### L. W. BROCKINGTON

#### DUTIES AS RECORDER OF CANADA'S WAR EFFORT AND COUNSELLOR TO WAR COMMITTEE OF CABINET

On the order for motions:

Hon. R. B. HANSON (Leader of the Opposition): Yesterday the Prime Minister (Mr. Mackenzie King) tabled a reply to a question asked by the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Roy). The first part of the question was:

Has the government appointed any person to write the history of our participation in the present war, and, if so, who was appointed

The answer was, "No," and the rest of the question was answered in the same sense. The answer is literally correct, I think, but in a practical sense I do not think it is correct; and I believe it is due to the house and the country that the Prime Minister should make some explanation as to just what the true position is.

I hold in my hand a copy of a press release issued when the Prime Minister made the announcement some months ago. It describes as follows the duties of the gentleman to whom it refers:

To act in an advisory capacity to the war committee of the cabinet in the recording and interpretation of Canada's war effort; to advise and assist the government in providing accurate and essential information in these respects to the people of Canada and to the government of the United Kingdom, and to assist the Prime Minister by keeping a chronicle and other essential records of the progress of Canada's war effort.

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The press report concludes:

In this capacity, Mr. Brockington will be designated, recorder of Canada's war effort and counsellor (in the above respects) to the war committee of the cabinet. He will be attached to the Prime Minister's office.

The essentials of the press release are incorporated in the order in council P.C. 4284 passed on the 21st December last, with respect to this appointment.

Now, the question related to the appointment of a person "to write the history of our participation in the present war". The exact duties as defined in the order in council are, "as a recorder and interpreter of Canada's war effort". They mean very much the same thing, and it does seem to me that the answer is somewhat misleading; I do not wish to put a worse interpretation upon it than that. Perhaps the Prime Minister did not give the question any personal consideration. I am not going to attribute any ulterior motives, but I think it ought to be made clear, on a fair interpretation of the order in council, the press release, and the duties to which I understand the gentleman referred to is engaged in, that he is in fact if not in name the historian of Canada's war effort.

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): I had no intention whatever of misleading the house in any way.

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I have not suggested that.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: As a matter of fact, no one has been appointed as historian of the war. After the last war Colonel Duguid was appointed to write a history of the war and I believe as historian he has thus far published two volumes. Mr. Brockington was certainly never appointed as historian of the war. He was appointed, among other duties, to keep a record of, and to help to chronicle, matters pertaining to the war, which is one of the functions he is performing at the present time.

As my hon. friend must know, events bearing upon the war are taking place in all parts of the world which have an important relation