

REPORTED IN PARLIAMENT BRIEFLY

HONG KONG STATEMENT: The Prime Minister, Mr. King, on Friday, March 12, made a further statement in the House of Commons on the matter of Hong Kong correspondence. He said:-

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in view of some of the doubts expressed and implications made, which are recorded in Hansard, as to statements of mine concerning communications between the Canadian Government and the United Kingdom Government respecting publication of the letter known as the Drew letter and the refusal of the United Kingdom Government to allow the publication of certain telegrams exchanged between the United Kingdom and Canadian Governments in 1941, I am sure hon. members will wish to have the following information on an exchange of question and answer which took place yesterday in the United Kingdom House of Commons. In justice to myself I feel this question and answer should also be recorded in Hansard.

The question appeared in the name of Mr. Quintin Hogg, Conservative M.P. for Oxford City. The text of the exchange is as follows:-

Question: "Mr. Hogg to ask the Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations what communications have passed between the Canadian and British Governments relative to the publication of letters known as the Drew (Premier Drew of Ontario) letters concerning Canadian troops at Hong Kong and if he now agreed to their publication."

Answer: "There has been no correspondence between His Majesty's Government in Canada and the United Kingdom about publication of letters from Colonel Drew to which the honourable member (Hogg) refers."

"The Canadian Government inquired whether they might publish certain telegrams exchanged between the United Kingdom and the Canadian Government in 1941 relating to the despatch of Canadian forces to Hong Kong and to the situation in the Far East at that time."

"We replied agreeing to the publication of those telegrams which related to the despatch of troops but we said that we felt unable to agree to the publication of telegrams relating to the international situation."

"Such telegrams are framed on the basis that they will not be published and the whole system of full and frank communication between His Majesty's Governments would be prejudiced if telegrams of this nature had to be prepared on the basis that this rule might not eventually be observed."

"The question was very carefully examined at the highest level and the United Kingdom regret that they cannot reconsider their decision."

STRENGTH OF ARMED FORCES: The Minister of National Defence, Mr. Claxton, made a brief statement in the House of Commons Tuesday on

recruiting for the armed forces. In reply to an inquiry by Alan Cockeram, (PC-York South) the Minister said:-

"That is hardly the type of question that can be dealt with briefly in an answer, but I can tell my hon. friend that steps have been taken to obtain recruits by publicity over the radio, in the press and by other means, so as to bring the armed forces of Canada, both active and reserve, up to authorized strength. Good progress is being made, and in comparison with other countries where similar conditions obtain, the showing is encouraging. Men are being taken in at about the rates we want to have them for the army. Recruit classes in the army are full. We would like to have far more for the navy and air force, and we are ready to take more in most of the reserve units, but altogether reasonably good progress is being made."

MINING OF RADIOACTIVE ORES: The Minister of Reconstruction, Mr. Howe, made the following statement in the House of Commons Tuesday on the mining of radioactive ores:-

"It will be recalled that Orders in Council passed in 1943 reserving title to radioactive minerals on crown lands in the Northwest Territories and the Yukon were extended under the Continuation of Transitional Measures Act, 1947, largely because the question of ownership of ores in the ground was still under discussion in the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission and it was felt that no action should be taken here that might embarrass those discussions. Since then, the second report of the United Nations Commission has been published, and that report does not contemplate ownership of ores in the ground by any international authority which may be established. As I told the House on March 25 last, the policy of the government is that radioactive material be controlled after it has been mined and the atomic energy regulations of Canada provide for this sort of control."

"While the Orders in Council were in effect and until the atomic energy regulations had been passed, it was necessary that mining operations be exclusively in the hands of the Government. The whole situation has been reviewed in the light of present circumstances and changed conditions, and the Government is now satisfied that it is in the best interests of Canada that restrictions against private prospecting and private development of radioactive minerals should be removed and has accordingly revoked the Orders in Council which reserved to the crown title in these minerals in the territories."

"The policy decided upon is as follows:

"The Government will purchase through Eldorado Mining and Refining (1944) Limited, or

other designated agency, acceptable uranium bearing ores and concentrates on the following basis:

- "1. A minimum uranium content equivalent to 10 per cent by weight of uranium oxide in the ores or concentrates will normally be required.
- "2. Price will be based upon the uranium content of the ores or concentrates and will be at the minimum rate of \$2.75 per pound of contained (U²³⁸) f.o.b. rail and will be guaranteed for a period of five years.
- "3. This price includes all radioactive elements in the ores or concentrates, but consideration will be given to the commercially recoverable value of non-radioactive constituents by adjustment of price or by the redelivery of the residues containing such constituents.
- "4. Under special circumstances, consideration may be given to payment of a higher price or to acceptance of ores or concentrates of lower grade.
- "5. All operations will be carried on subject to the provisions of the atomic energy regulations of Canada.

"That constitutes the new policy. As noted, the new policy permits private exploration and private mining and proposes to encourage both by putting on the ores a definite minimum value, which will be the minimum value for the next five years. I might say that I was interested to note that the semi-annual report of the United States Atomic Energy Commission to the Senate and the House of Representatives, which reached me only yesterday, contains the following two paragraphs:

"The Commission believes new reserves of source materials can best be developed by competitive private industry, under the stimulus of profits, and the means of accomplishing this are under study."

"In general it will be commission policy to purchase ores for its programme from private sources and limit direct government production as far as possible."

"It would seem that, although we arrived at the Canadian policy independently, the policy of the United States will follow parallel lines."

Leaders of Canada's four major political parties denounced Communism in the House of Commons on Wednesday.

Debate arose on a motion of adjournment by John Bracken, Progressive Conservative leader. His motion, he said, was made to discuss a matter of urgent public importance, namely, the menace to the peace of Canada arising from the activities in this country of communist agents - a matter, he said, calling for immediate attention at this time because:-

"(a) Canada is regarded by the communists as of supreme strategic importance in the communist bid for global domination;

"(b) Communist agents, some of them under

diplomatic immunity, some of them Canadian citizens, have succeeded in corrupting officials of the public service of this country;

"(c) Canada is regarded by the communists as a vital source of information respecting the development of the atomic bomb;

"(d) Communist agents are boring into the labour organizations of this country with a view to wrecking recognized labour organizations and undermining industrial peace and crippling the productive capacity of the country both in peace and in the event of war;

"(e) Recent events in Europe, especially in Czechoslovakia and Finland, can leave no reasonable doubt that the aim of communism is to destroy democracy, wherever it exists, and substitute for it puppet police states."

Tendering full support to any Government effort aimed at suppressing communism, Mr. Bracken said of Communism:-

"Communism, in my judgment, is just a blood brother of Nazism and Fascism. Under all three the individual has no rights against the state and no purpose on earth but to serve the state. Communism is essentially nihilistic; it is a creed of destruction. It was conceived in hatred, it is being nurtured in violence. It has been brought to maturity in Russia where it is being used as a weapon of world conquest."

Prime Minister King said that if he had received notice of the intention to bring up the matter at that time he would have brought data answering some questions asked by Mr. Bracken, particularly in relation to what steps had been taken over the past year or two to make certain that the public service was not being infiltrated by those holding communist views. He added:-

"May I just remind this house, and Canada itself, that, after all, ours was the first Government in the world to expose the activities of Communists in the public service, and I may add I was the first to stand up in this Parliament and indicate how appallingly dangerous the possibilities were. I did not confine what I had to say to Parliament here. I made it a point to visit the United States personally and to confer on this danger with the highest authorities in that country; I made it a point to visit Britain and confer with the highest authorities in the United Kingdom. In both countries I disclosed what we had discovered in Canada with respect to communist infiltration into the public service, and the dangers to which it was likely to lead and to methods that were being employed. And at this moment I do not forget that my colleague, the then Minister of Justice, the present Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. St. Laurent), was taken pretty severely to task because it was alleged that, in authorizing the steps necessary, he was interfering with individual liberty. He took the only