

*Interim Supply*

Mr. Lesage and his wife spent the week end visiting archaeological sites at Delhi, Corinth, Mycenae, Epidavros and Sounion.

At noon yesterday Mr. Lesage was the guest at an informal luncheon organized by 500 representatives of Massey-Ferguson Ltd., a Canadian farm implement manufacturer, who are meeting in Athens . . . Mr. Lesage said: "Canadians do not customarily accept decorations. However, because this decoration has been bestowed on me by a king and not by a government, I consider it my duty to accept it."

I was quite interested in this act by the King of Greece in offering a decoration to Premier Lesage of Quebec, because a friend of mine, a Canadian of Italian descent, had been offered a similar decoration by the Republic of Italy some time prior to this. I asked the Secretary of State for External Affairs if it would be in order for my very close and good friend, who has been for 45 years a naturalized Canadian, to accept a decoration from the Republic of Italy which had been offered to him.

This particular friend and I were a little concerned over this matter, because when another very good friend of mine—and when I refer to Lord Thomson of Fleet as being a good friend of mine; I am not a Johnny-come-lately in his entourage of friends, because I have known Roy Thomson for over 35 years and I have liked him every day of that long friendship—when Mr. Roy Thomson, a native born Canadian, born in the city of Toronto, was given an honour by the Queen of Canada, he lost his Canadian citizenship.

It was of some concern to my friend of Italian descent whether he would lose his Canadian citizenship if he accepted the honour from the Italian government when, as a native born Canadian, Roy Thomson had lost his Canadian citizenship when he accepted the title of Lord Thomson of Fleet.

As a result a formal approach was made to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and under date of June 4, 1964 I received this letter:

Protocol . . .

Thank you for your letter on May 29, regarding the award which the Italian Government wishes to make to Mr. DeToro.

Mr. DeToro is quite right in his assumption that foreign decorations should not be accepted by Canadians without the permission of their own government and it has been Canadian policy, for many years, to refuse such permission unless the award is being offered in connection with the saving of human life.

The diplomatic missions in Ottawa have been informed of our policy in this matter and have been asked, if their governments wish to nominate Canadians for awards, to have such requests

[Mr. Cowan.]

sent through the Department of External Affairs. We would expect to have such requests forwarded to us by the embassy concerned.

Yours sincerely,

And the original copy is signed by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Because of this very formal statement that it has been Canadian policy for many years to refuse such permission unless the award is being offered in connection with the saving of human life, my good friend, Mr. DeToro, advised the Italian government that he considered it in his own best interest not to accept the proffered honour.

The letter to which I referred is dated June 4, 1964, and the news item to which I referred regarding the Royal Order of the Phoenix from Greece for Premier Lesage is as of November 3, 1964, about five months after the letter. I then went to the Department of External Affairs and asked if permission had been granted to Premier Lesage to accept this foreign decoration because he had saved human life. I received no answer whatsoever.

I then found it necessary on March 7, of this year, when we were passing the estimates for the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to query the present Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, whom I wish to praise highly because of his openness in answering, in the manner illustrated on page 2321 of *Hansard* of March 7. I shall read the question in part, and would read the whole thing, were there time. I quote:

Here is the third question. A very close friend of mine who is a naturalized Canadian has been offered a senior decoration by a foreign government and hesitates to accept it because he does not wish to lose his Canadian citizenship. When we deprive a native born Canadian like my friend Roy Thomson of his citizenship because he accepts a peerage from the Queen of Canada, what hope is there of a naturalized Canadian retaining his citizenship if he accepts a foreign decoration from the head of another government? My friend is fearful on this score because he recognizes he is a naturalized Canadian whereas Roy Thomson and Premier Jean Lesage are native born. Which example would we follow, the one set in the case of Roy Thomson or the one set in the case of Jean Lesage, if my friend accepts a foreign decoration this spring?

• (12:30 p.m.)

The answer is to be found, in part, on page 2328. When supply is voted, the minister replies at the end of the debate. Here is the first part of the answer:

The hon. member for York-Humber asked some questions about Lord Thomson. I do not know this case personally but I am informed he voluntarily