

EXPULSION OF CANADIANS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA

On January 21, the Department of External Affairs announced that word had been received from the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires in Prague that the Czechoslovak Ministry of Foreign Affairs had demanded that Sergeant R. W. Danko and Corporal J. G. Vanier of the Staff of the Canadian Air Attaché in Prague leave Czechoslovakia "within twelve hours". The Ministry had made certain charges against these two men without producing any supporting evidence, and had declared them to be *persona non grata*.

The incident, the announcement continued, was apparently part of a deliberate policy in certain of the satellite countries where members of the staffs of Western diplomatic missions have been subjected to baseless accusations, followed by demands for their expulsion.

It was further announced that the Canadian Government had under active consideration the appropriate steps to be taken in the circumstances; that Sergeant Danko and Corporal Vanier had been recalled to Canada and had already left Czechoslovakia; and that their personal reports would be made immediately they arrived.

After the return to Canada on February 1 of Sergeant Danko and Corporal Vanier, the Department of External Affairs issued the following statement on February 2:

The following account of the incidents that took place in Prague on January 17 and 18, after which Sergeant Danko and Corporal Vanier were withdrawn from Czechoslovakia, is drawn from the reports of the Canadian Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. John A. Irwin, the Canadian Air Attaché, Group Captain R. A. Cameron, and the two men themselves.

On the afternoon of January 17, when Sergeant Danko left his apartment house with his wife, he saw at the street door three roughly-dressed and threatening-looking individuals who seemed to be taking considerable interest in him. He did not know who they were but feared some trouble for himself. When he returned home later in the afternoon he took the precaution of having with him Corporal Vanier and another member of the Legation staff. The three men he had seen before he now found inside the building in front of his apartment door. He asked them if they were police and what they were doing there. They replied that they were not police and were waiting to see a lawyer who lived on the same floor. They asked for no identification and offered none; nor when asked would they identify themselves.

That evening at 8:30 Danko and Vanier were in the Danko apartment with Mrs. Danko and a party of four ladies. About 9 o'clock they left the flat. Mrs. Danko was left behind in the apartment. At the door of the apartment house one of a watching trio accosted the leading pair and spoke in Czech, apparently asking for identification cards. One of the men was ill-advised enough to lay a hand on a girl in the party. Vanier demanded to see the man's own identification papers and when he would not produce them but insisted on interfering, Vanier brushed him aside. This caused him to stumble and fall. Vanier pulled him up by the coat and warned him to make off, which he and his companions did. The latter did not offer to interfere in any way. The man's coat was torn,