

Supply—External Affairs

United States generous provision has been made for the work of such associations. This grant is based on seeking to do what we regard as right and proper in the circumstances of an international gathering of one of the most important scientific bodies on the continent at a time of its meeting in the capital of Canada. So far as the medical association is concerned, I think my hon. friend said it was a Canadian association being entirely composed of our own citizens. In this case the grant is in part the exchange of an international courtesy.

Item agreed to.

Canada's contributions to maintenance of external organizations—To the expenses of the League of Nations for 1938, including secretariat, international labour organization and permanent court of international justice, \$150,565.

Mr. THOMPSON: What amount of last year's grant of \$155,000 was expended for this purpose?

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: The whole amount.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: Mr. Chairman, there is a matter I should like to bring up which does not come strictly under this item, but I do not know that there is any other under which I can raise it. I asked the Prime Minister the other day with regard to the prospective sale of Anticosti island, and he informed me that the matter was being watched by the government and that he thought the interests of Canada were being safeguarded. Perhaps we might have a little fuller information. It is certainly a matter pertaining to external affairs. From my standpoint, whether or not Anticosti island is going to a German company under whose ownership it might possibly be used for some purpose not for the welfare of Canada, it is highly undesirable in any event that a large piece of territory in Canada should pass into the hands of foreign interests, any foreign interests.

Mr. BENNETT: Hear, hear.

Mr. WOODSWORTH: I suggested the other day that there were possibly dangers because of the strategic position the island occupies. I do not know whether it might be made the base of operations or whether certain preparations might be made there that would render the island valuable in time of trouble; but if the right hon. leader of the opposition was right when he said a day or so ago that during the great war mines were laid off our own coast, I think it would be highly undesirable

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

that any foreign government should have a base somewhere near our coast. I do not think the members of this house will accuse me of being in any sense an alarmist; but war is war, and here is an island situated right within our doors and right beside the great United States republic to the south of us. That is one aspect of the case.

Again, if any foreign interests get hold of the resources of that island, they might desire to export them whether or not it was in the interests of this country, and it might be extremely difficult for us to enforce our own regulations under those circumstances. While primarily this is a matter that concerns the province of Quebec, there is a larger question involved. If there is any danger of the island passing into foreign hands, the dominion government should take it over as public property. I do not know if it can be turned into a park; but let it be turned into any sort of asset you please rather than have it pass into foreign hands. The island is too important to pass into foreign hands and under foreign management. Would the Prime Minister inform us a little more definitely on this matter than he did a few days ago in answer to the question I put on the orders of the day.

Mr. MACKENZIE KING: May I say to my hon. friend that I think the question he has raised is quite a proper one to raise at this time. As I informed him, the government has been watching the situation as far as Anticosti island is concerned from the time there were rumours that certain foreign interests might seek to acquire the island. Not only has the federal government been watching the situation carefully but also the government of the province of Quebec, of which province Anticosti island is a part. Our two governments have been in correspondence with each other, and I think I may say that we are now of the opinion that because of misunderstandings to which it might give rise it would not be in the interests of Canada to have Anticosti island at this time pass into the hands of a foreign corporation. I think my hon. friend and the house may be assured that such will not be permitted to take place.

I should however like my hon. friend to consider for a moment to what his suggestion might lead if the government were to begin buying up and expropriating properties that corporations were seeking to dispose of to foreigners. Instead of having a possible base established at Anticosti we would be having