

contains information that would have a bearing on some of the trials about to take place. In that report Mr. Williams recommended that the best course to pursue would be to appoint a royal commission and to obtain as commissioners the best persons it would be possible to secure. It was on that advice that the government came to request the services of Mr. Justice Taschereau and Mr. Justice Kellock, two members of the Supreme Court of Canada. Here, again the government realized that questions as to the liberty of the subject and of individual freedom were certain to arise in the exploration of the extent and development of this system of espionage, and that it would therefore be most desirable and indeed, absolutely necessary to have as commissioners persons who, above all, would be most anxious to protect the liberty of the subject, and to see that justice was done—and justice only.

I have heard hon. members opposite speak about the importance of upholding justice, and of having justice followed in every step in this matter. That is why, to the exclusion of all others, two justices of the Supreme Court of Canada were selected. The government did not know where in Canada it could find two persons who would be more certain to uphold justice in every particular, or who would be more zealous in protecting the freedom and liberty of the subject than would two justices of the Supreme Court of Canada. I hope this will be kept in mind by hon. members if at any stage they are inclined to criticize some of the methods which necessarily have been adopted to fulfil the purpose of the inquiry.

I said a moment ago that there had been other conferences. Hon. members will recall that in December there was a meeting in Moscow at which the Secretary of State for the United States, and Mr. Bevin, the Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom, met with Mr. Molotov in Moscow to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern. That would not have been an appropriate moment at which to have gone into this matter. Had an investigation been started at that time in Canada, it might conceivably have been said, or it might have been thought that it had been planned with a view to making difficulties in connection with that particular meeting.

Then there came the united nations meeting in London, the preparatory commission of the united nations organization, the meeting of the assembly and of the security council. It was most important that these bodies should be organized with as little as possible in the way of mistrust, suspicion or recrimina-

tion. Here, again, was another factor which entered into the judgment of my colleague, the Minister of Justice and myself as to the time at which it would be most appropriate to begin proceedings.

And here may I make a statement which I think it is important to make. My hope had been that it might be possible to have an inquiry which would attract very little in the way of public attention, at least until matters were in such shape that only those against whom evidence seemed to be conclusive would be apprehended and committed for trial. I thought that possibly we might have members of the public service whose names unfortunately have been brought into this situation examined by deputies and ministers of the departments; in the presence of the Minister of Justice, and that the matter might be dealt with in that way. That illustrates only one of several ways in which we hoped the matter could have been dealt with so as to have as little effect as possible on international relations.

A moment's consideration, however, made it clear that anything of that nature was wholly impossible. In the first place it would not have been possible to have made more than a very limited inquiry. And in this situation, because of its vast proportions, it was all important that if there was anything to it at all we should go into it thoroughly and see that nothing was left undone which could possibly be done to clean up a situation of the kind.

I now come to the question of the apprehension of the persons who have been detained. This afternoon my hon. friend asked me to explain when speaking this evening why the order in council passed on October 6, giving authority to the minister to have individuals apprehended and detained, was not made known to the House of Commons at the time the Emergency Powers Transition Act was passed and a question was asked as to whether there still remained any secret orders in council under the War Measures Act.

The explanation, in a word, is this: I have spoken about a very trusted official who had left Canada to go to England, who was to make contact there with certain persons, who had, as we have reason to believe, very important information in his possession, and who was in a position to give perhaps as much in the way of information as almost any other with regard to certain aspects of research on atomic energy, and matters pertaining thereto.

Contact was to be made in London on October 7. It was understood that if this person should make contact and thereupon be apprehended and brought before the police for