

Britain's interest in the strength and security of North America. The other sites in the Bahamas, the British West Indies and British Guiana, forming an outer ring of defence to the Panama canal, were leased in exchange for fifty over-age United States destroyers.

The house is aware that six of the fifty destroyers have since been made available to the Royal Canadian Navy and are already in *commission. During a recent visit to Halifax, I had an opportunity of visiting some of the destroyers about to be transferred and of seeing how completely they were equipped. I was also privileged to extend to the United States admiral who brought the destroyers to Canadian waters the thanks of the government and people of Canada. I had previously written to the president to express our appreciation. Hon. members may be interested in the contents of my letter and the president's reply, and perhaps I might be permitted to place these on *Hansard* without reading them. My letter was as follows:

Ottawa, 30th September, 1940.

Dear Mr. President,

During the last few days I have been receiving reports from the officers in command of our naval service concerning the delivery and transfer of the United States destroyers to Canada and to the United Kingdom. One of the aspects of this transfer which has been repeatedly referred to in these reports is the splendid condition in which the vessels arrived in Canada and the cordial and cooperative attitude displayed by the officers and crews when the transfer was actually being effected. I have been told, for example, that the vessels were so completely equipped that not only were the mess appointments in perfect condition but the larders were stored as though the vessels were to be used for prolonged cruises with their United States personnel aboard.

I want you to know that the thoughtfulness and consideration which have been displayed in these, perhaps minor, but very characteristic actions, have been recognized and very deeply appreciated by the Canadian naval service and by the government of this country as well. I hope that you will inform the responsible officers that the way in which they have acted in arranging and carrying out the transfer of these vessels has been brought directly to my attention, and that I have asked that they should be thanked collectively and individually on behalf of the Canadian navy, the Canadian government and the Canadian people.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Yours very sincerely,

W. L. Mackenzie King.

The president's reply reads:

October 17, 1940.

Dear Mr. King:

Your very cordial letter concerning the manner and condition in which our destroyers have been turned over to Canada and the United Kingdom has given me great pleasure.

I shall be happy indeed to have conveyed to the responsible officers the sentiments you have so graciously expressed.

On their behalf and that of the United States navy please accept my sincere thanks.

With kindest personal regards, I am

Yours very sincerely,

Franklin D. Roosevelt.

Now for a word as to the conversations which preceded the Ogdensburg agreement. The agreement itself was not due to any sudden or precipitate action. It was the outcome of several conversations between the president and myself with respect to coastal defence on both the Atlantic and the Pacific, in which the mutual interests of Canada and the United States were discussed. It has seemed to me that I should reserve for parliament such statement as it might be advisable to make with reference to those conversations which, in their nature, necessarily were highly confidential. I might say I have received the president's permission to refer to them publicly.

In the matter of time and significance, the conversations between President Roosevelt and myself on matters pertaining to the common interest of our two countries in the defence of their coasts, divide themselves naturally into two groups: the conversations which took place prior to the commencement of the war, and those which have taken place since.

The first conversation was on the occasion of a visit I paid the president at the White House, as long ago as March, 1937. At that time the discussion had reference to the position on the Pacific as well as on the Atlantic coasts. It was then agreed that, at some time in the future, meetings might be arranged between the staff officers of both countries to discuss problems of common defence.

On September 30 of that year, the president paid a visit to Victoria, British Columbia, crossing on a United States destroyer from Seattle. This visit led to arrangements for talks between staff officers regarding Pacific coast problems, which took place in Washington in January, 1938.

I think I may say that on every occasion on which I have visited the president in the United States, or on which I have met the president on his visits to Canada, matters pertaining to the defence of this continent have been a subject of conversation between us.

The defences on the Atlantic were referred to particularly in our conversations in August, 1938, in the course of the president's visit to Kingston, and the opening of the Thousand Islands bridge at Ivy Lee. At that time, it will be recalled, the president made the open declaration that the people of the United