

consistent with joint security. The necessity for secrecy which was mentioned in the statement made the other day by the president of the research council, Dr. MacKenzie, to which reference was made by the member for Peel, arises of course from the fact that the material of atomic energy is the same whether it is used for peaceful or warlike purposes. Naturally, that factor has to be taken into account by all governments in their release of information to industrial concerns, but the secrecy requirements in this regard are the same in all three countries. While it is true that the United States has turned over to private industry the operation of certain of its atomic energy plants which are operated on a commercial scale, the information gained from the operation of these plants is not more widely disseminated to industry in the United States than it is to industry in Canada. The Canadian government has already called industry together to point out the commercial uses of radioisotopes that are now available from Chalk River. It has offered to train men from industry in the use of such isotopes and for a period of one year has offered to supply radioisotopes to industry without cost. Several Canadian industrial firms are already taking advantage of this offer.

During the debate a good deal of attention has been devoted to questions which concern the Far East and the Pacific. We have had some interesting statements devoted to that part of the world. I was particularly interested in listening to the statement of the hon. member for Lambton-Kent (Mr. MacKenzie), with whom I was once associated in UNRRA activities. I can assure those members who have expressed some concern at our alleged lack of interest in Pacific problems as compared with our absorbing interest in north Atlantic and European problems--and I am thinking more particularly of the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra (Mr. Green)--that there is on the part of the government no such lack of interest in the Pacific.

In his remarks the hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra and, I think, another member as well, referred to certain talks that the press had reported as having recently been held in Canberra. They both expressed some interest in the fact that Canada had not been represented at those talks.

There was one reference to recent talks in Canberra. The Singapore talks took place some months ago. The Canberra talks to which the hon. member made reference took place only a few days ago. The reason we were not at those talks is, of course, that we were not invited to them. That statement is not as drastic as it may sound because our information is that the talks were informal ones arranged in Canberra by the Australian minister for external affairs with the New Zealand deputy minister of external affairs and an under secretary from the United Kingdom foreign office in charge of Far Eastern affairs who happened to be in Canberra at that time. No formal conference of any kind as far as we know took place.

The hon. member for Vancouver-Quadra also asked the government whether they proposed to take part in the conference of commonwealth external affairs ministers which has been called to meet in Colombo, Ceylon, in January. I had already intended to speak on this matter because it was only today that it was agreed among the governments concerned that publicity could be given to it. I am in a position to tell the house that we have received from the prime minister of Ceylon an invitation to attend the conference in question.

It will be recalled that about a year ago, in the report of the meeting of prime ministers in London, reference was made to the desirability of having meetings of commonwealth ministers of external affairs from time to time when the situation seemed to warrant such meetings. The government of Ceylon has called this meeting, and the government of Canada is, of course, happy to accept the invitation to participate in it; it is particularly happy because of the fact that the meeting will be held in the newest of the independent nations that make up the commonwealth. We are particularly glad that this meeting will take place in an Asian dominion and that in that sense it will reflect the importance of the new Asiatic members of the commonwealth.

The government will be represented by a minister. It has been suggested that that minister should be the Secretary of State for External Affairs. But