

informed that no such improvement occurred, and the chargé d'affaires made further strong representations to the Peking Government on November 1.

During the past two days news services have carried stories of the formal prosecution and sentencing of the five nuns at so-called public trials on December 1. According to these reports, Sister St. Alphonse du Redempteur, (Antoinette Couvrette, born at Ste. Dorothee, Quebec) and Sister Marie-Germaine (Germaine Gravel of St. Pasteur, Quebec) were sentenced to five years' imprisonment. Sister Ste. Foy (Elizabeth Lemire of La Baie du Febvre, Quebec), Sister St. Victor (Germaine Tanguay, born in Acton Vale, Quebec), and Sister Ste. Germaine (Imelda Laperriere of Pont Rouge, Quebec) were ordered to be deported from China. The Canadian Government has no official confirmation as yet of these reports.

We know that the five nuns have been in Canton prison since March of this year when they were arrested on what was considered to be the fantastic charge of being responsible for the deaths between October 14, 1949, and January 14, 1951, of over two thousand children who had been receiving care in their orphanage. Their arrests followed upon Canton newspaper stories and the demands of women's organizations that they be severely punished for the maltreatment and murder of children. It may be true that quite a large number of children have died at the orphanage, but the Chinese authorities chose to ignore the fact that the majority of the children brought to the sisters were already ailing and beyond hope of recovery when accepted by them. The sisters consistently accepted all children brought to them for help, whatever their condition was at that time, and no matter what were their chances for survival.

As I have already said, no official report regarding the trial of the five nuns has yet been received in Canada, and it is possible that it may be difficult to secure any accurate and reliable information about the so-called trials. I can assure the House that everything possible will be done to help these unfortunate Sisters without bringing more harm on them or other Canadians who are being detained by the Chinese Communists at this time. I think that the order of expulsion may be perhaps the most happy denouement, and it would be unfortunate if anything we said or did brought about, as has happened in the past, revocation of the order of expulsion, or the placing of difficulties in the quitting of the country.

The House will be shocked and indignant at the treatment which has apparently been meted out to a group of missionaries who for years have consecrated their lives to the care of orphan children in China; but it will be at the same time sensitive to the extreme delicacy of the situation and the necessity of avoiding any act or word which may add to their present distress. Within the next few days we hope to have more definite information on the whereabouts of the three nuns whose expulsion has been ordered, and on the situation of the two who have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment. We are hopeful that we may, through the British authorities in Hong Kong, be able to get information from and about these nuns, because we presume that they would go through Hong Kong on their way out of the country. I shall naturally keep the House informed of anything that we can regard as accurate in the way of information about them.

Repatriation

On December 29, in reply to a question two days earlier by Mr. Browne (PS, St. John's West) regarding the number of Canadian missionaries still remaining in China and the policy of the Government for their repatriation, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Pearson, made the following statement:

The records of the Department of External Affairs show that the total number of Canadians in China is 201, and of these 162 are missionaries and their dependents. On a number of occasions toward the end of the civil war in China, and after the Communists achieved power, the Canadian Government notified all Canadian citizens in China known to the Canadian representatives that in view of the situation in that country they should leave as soon as possible. Many of them have done so, as the figures I have just given would indicate. Others have not been able to, or from the highest motives of service to the Chinese people themselves, have not desired to.