

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

June 4, 1946.

The Standing Committee on External Affairs met this day at 11.30 o'clock a.m. The Chairman, Mr. J. A. Bradette, presided.

The CHAIRMAN: Thank you, gentlemen, for being here this morning. I know it has been difficult because there are many committees sitting. I believe it will be in order now to call Mr. Wrong first because he is going to answer some questions. Then after we have heard Mr. Wrong, if we have time, we will hear Mr. Varcoe the Deputy Minister of Justice.

Mr. H. H. Wrong, Associate Under Secretary of State for External Affairs, recalled

The WITNESS: Mr. Chairman, there were two matters introduced at the last meeting upon which I was going to give information to the committee. Those two matters were the present status of temporary employees in the Department of External Affairs and the work of the information division of the department and its relationship to the Canadian Information Service. With regard to the first matter I should like to make a statement concerning two groups of temporary employees and then ask Mr. Hemsley to supplement my statement, because he knows a good deal more than I do about administrative arrangements and discussions with the Civil Service Commission. With regard to the second matter, I should also like to make a brief statement and ask Mr. Soward to deal with that matter. He has come with me today, and he is supervising the work of the information division at present in addition to his other duties, because the chief of that division, Mr. MacDermot, has been loaned temporarily to the Secretary General of the United Nations to assist him in the recruiting of staff for the secretariat and he is now in New York.

Now, dealing with the question of the temporaries, as I said, there were two groups. During the war when the work of the department expanded phenomenally, it was necessary, of course, to add to the executive staff of the department. We did that largely by borrowing people from universities and from other employment. In the main they were people who would be able to return to their previous employment at the end of the war if they so wished. There are a considerable number of officers of the department, and some stationed abroad, who were appointed temporarily in that capacity. Some of them have already returned to their previous employment, to our regret, and some of them, including Mr. Soward himself who is here today, are going to leave us before the beginning of the next academic year. Some of these people we are very anxious to keep in the department. We have been running a competition through the Civil Service Commission for appointments in the senior grades of the foreign service, grade III to grade VI, which are open to all comers. We did it that way so that the veterans' preference could be given a full chance to operate. Those who could qualify for admission from the army would be entitled to the veterans' preference over any of those whom we had temporarily employed during the war who did not possess the veterans' preference in the last war. as a number of them did not, even if those we temporarily engaged without veterans' preference