



PRESS RELEASE

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The Department of External Affairs announced today that the United Kingdom Chargé d'Affaires in Peking made representations on September 1 to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Central People's Government of China expressing the grave concern of the Canadian Government at China's policy towards Canadians and requesting that measures be taken in the near future to bring about an improvement in this situation. The Canadian Government has availed itself of the good offices of the United Kingdom Chargé d'Affaires in the absence of a Canadian representative in Peking.

Representations were made in April about the arrest of United Kingdom, Australian, Canadian and United States nationals and their detention incommunicado often without any explanation of the reason for their arrest. However, the position has in fact deteriorated since that time. Arbitrary arrests and detention for indefinite periods without access to families, friends or national representatives have continued. Harsh treatment has been inflicted on missionaries of all denominations and on other people who have for many years been engaged in humanitarian work in China. In addition continual difficulties and delays are placed in the way of all classes of foreign nationals wishing to obtain entry and exit permits.

The treatment inflicted on Canadians in China is a matter of continuing concern to the Canadian Government which welcomed the opportunity of being associated with the approach of the United Kingdom Chargé d'Affaires to the Peking Government, who spoke on behalf of the Governments of the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and the United States.

It will be recalled that seven Canadians are known to be under arrest in China. Five Sisters of the Immaculate Conception are being detained in Canton; Dr. Stewart Allen, a United Church Medical Missionary, is under arrest in Szechwan; Bishop C.M. O'Gara of the Order of the Passionist Fathers was arrested at Yuanling and is now reported to be in hospital but there is no indication that he has been released from detention.
