

THE ELIBANK INCIDENTSuggested Comment on Elibank Speech.

These remarks constituted direct criticism of the policy of the Canadian Government, in a matter for which that Government is responsible to the Canadian Parliament and the Canadian people.

Lord Elibank is a member of the Parliament of the United Kingdom and has no status to advise the Canadian Government, or to criticize the Canadian Government to the Canadian people.

Lord Elibank's criticism, under the actual circumstances as they existed in Canada at that time, was a criticism of the late Conservative administration, which had reduced Defence Estimates by about 10 million dollars, and had slashed the Air Force to a quarter of its former efficiency and activity.

The criticisms came too late to have any point because:

(1) the former Conservative Government had already been turned out of office.

(2) the present Government had already increased Defence appropriations by 5 million dollars (approximately 35%) chiefly for Air Force purposes.

Lord Elibank, as a stranger in this Country, was not aware of these facts and his obvious ignorance illustrates the impropriety of a citizen of another country undertaking to discuss the affairs of another.

Although his criticism had no application in fact to the present administration, it was justly resented as an intrusion into the domestic affairs of the Government of this Country

W.L.M. King Papers, Memoranda and Notes, 1933-1939  
(M.G. 26, J 4, volume 157, pages C112217-C112961)

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