

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

HOUSE OF COMMONS,

June 17, 1947.

The Special Joint Committee on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms met this day at 11 o'clock a.m. The Right Hon. J. L. Ilsley (Joint Chairman), presided.

The CHAIRMAN: It has been brought to my attention that the committee has no power to send for persons, papers and records, and to report from time to time to parliament. Therefore, I think somebody might move a motion.

Mr. CROLL: I will move, seconded by Mr. Belzile, that the committee ask for power to send for persons, papers and records and to report from time to time to parliament.

The CHAIRMAN: You have heard the motion. Is there any discussion? Those in favour say "aye". Those against say "nay". Motion carried.

It has been arranged that to-day we shall have an official of the Department of External Affairs who will give us some information as to the obligations which this country assumed at the United Nations. I suggest that Mr. R. G. Riddell of the Department of External Affairs be called to give such information as he can.

R. G. Riddell, Chief, First Political Division, Department of External Affairs, called.

By the Chairman:

Q. What is your position in the department?—A. I am Chief of the First Political Division of the Department of External Affairs which is the division responsible for United Nations affairs and international conferences.

Q. Can you give the committee any information as to our obligations to the United Nations in respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms?—A. We have prepared in the Department of External Affairs, and have now placed in the hands of the clerk of the committee, three documents which you may wish to call to the attention of the committee. The first of these, which we have numbered Department of External Affairs Document No. 1, contains the text of measures adopted by various United Nations bodies together with a description of the machinery for considering the subject of human rights and fundamental freedoms within the United Nations.

There are two other documents which have been prepared for the committee. Document No. 2 is the text of a draft international bill of human rights which was prepared by a committee of jurists and lawyers appointed by the American Law Institute, and which was subsequently submitted to the General Assembly by the delegation of Panama.

The third document is a draft international bill of human rights which was prepared by the government of the United Kingdom and submitted to a drafting group of a commission of the United Nations which is now considering the subject of human rights.

I suggest that the committee might consider first document No. 1 which contains the relevant documentary material adopted by various bodies of the United Nations. This document commences by giving the text of the relevant sections of the charter of the United Nations. Is it your wish that I read this document?