

value of exports in relation to imports declines substantially from 1938 to 1946, while Canada and several other countries showed smaller reductions.

Argentina, Turkey, Brazil and New Zealand, where imports and exports were approximately in balance in 1938, found themselves with large export balances in 1946, exports amounting to more than twice the value of imports in Argentina, 180 per cent in Turkey, 146 per cent in Brazil and 137 per cent in New Zealand. Mexico, on the other hand, exported only 69 per cent of the value of her imports in 1946, although her pre-war merchandise trade was almost exactly in balance.

JAP WAR CRIMINALS

COMMUTED SENTENCES: The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. L.S. St. Laurent, issued a statement Dec. 8 regarding the commutation of the sentences of two Japanese war criminals who had been convicted of war crimes involving the inhumane treatment of Canadian Service personnel.

The Minister explained that arrangements had been made for the trial of Far Eastern war criminals accused of atrocities against Canadians by United Kingdom and United States Military Courts in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Canadian War Crimes Detachments provided assistance in the way of collecting evidence, aiding in the prosecution, etc.

The two individuals involved in this instance were Col. Isao Tokunaga and Capt. Shun-kichi Saito who had been Commander and Medical Officer respectively of all Prisoner of War Camps in the Hong Kong area. They had been accused of war crimes, and in accordance with the procedure described above, were tried by a British tribunal, No. 5 War Crimes Court, in Hong Kong. The prosecution was conducted by a Canadian Officer, Maj. G.B. Puddicombe, while another Canadian, Maj. Jean T. Loranger, K.C., was a member of the Court.

Col. Tokunaga was found guilty of eight of the ten charges brought against him. Three of the findings on these charges found him guilty of being concerned in the deaths, resulting from inhumane treatment, of Canadians. Capt. Saito was found guilty of four of the five charges brought against him. Two findings found him guilty of being concerned in deaths, resulting from inhumane treatment, of Canadians.

Both accused were sentenced to death by hanging.

The Acting General Officer Commanding at Hong Kong, on July 11, 1947, commuted Col. Tokunaga's sentence to life imprisonment and Capt. Saito's sentence to twenty years' imprisonment.

At the request of the Department of National Defence, the Department of External Affairs asked the High Commissioner for Canada in the United Kingdom to endeavour to ascertain from the appropriate United Kingdom authorities

whether the basis upon which these sentences were commuted could properly be ascertained or disclosed. The Canadian High Commissioner has now received a reply from the United Kingdom authorities, reading in part as follows:

"The general position is that, according to the applicable regulations, the commutation of a death sentence is a matter within the discretion of the Confirming Officer - in these cases the General Officer Commanding Hong Kong, or his duly appointed deputy. Any decision by a Confirming Officer is of course made after careful consideration of the available evidence, and it should be emphasized that, before coming to a decision in cases of this kind, that Officer has the benefit of the advice of the Deputy Judge Advocate General at his own headquarters, or at the headquarters of a higher formation. Moreover, it is true to say that, as a general rule, a Confirming Officer is naturally reluctant to interfere with the sentence of a Military Court unless he is convinced that to let the sentence stand would result in a miscarriage of justice. The matter, however, rests entirely within the discretion of the Confirming Officer who cannot be asked to disclose the grounds for his decision.

"For the reason just stated it is not possible to say what were the precise considerations which guided the Acting General Officer Commanding, Hong Kong, in making his decision in the cases of Tokunaga and Saito. It is possible that in Saito's case he was influenced by the fact that, although Saito was guilty of the highest degree of criminal neglect, his were offences of omission, rather than of commission.

"However that may be... the relatives of others who suffered as the result of these war crimes, with whom the fullest sympathy is felt, and to whom the substance of this letter may, if desired, be communicated, may be assured that the decision was taken only after the most careful consideration of all the evidence, and with a full sense of responsibility, by the authority legally competent to commute the sentences."

BULGARIAN CAPITAL LEVY: The Department of External Affairs announces that the deadline for filing returns under the Bulgarian capital levy tax law has been set for December 31, 1947, for persons residing outside of Bulgaria.

According to the provisions of the law, assets, including real property, bank accounts, securities, etc., in Bulgaria owned by foreign nationals are subject to the tax.

Special forms for making returns may be obtained from Bulgaria. In view of the shortage of time, however, it is suggested that any Canadians owning property in Bulgaria may wish to submit declarations in the form of detailed lists of assets to the Bulgarian Legation, 2841 McGill Terrace, N.W., Washington, D.C., U.S.A.

STATE OF PARTIES: When Parliament opened on December 5, the state of parties in the two Houses was:

THE SENATE	
Libs.....	65
Pro. Cons.....	22
Vacant.....	9
Total.....	96
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
Libs.....	126
Pro. Cons.....	67
C.C.F.....	28
Ind. C.C.F.....	1
Soc. Credit.....	13
Union des Electeurs...	1
Ind. Lib.....	2
Independent.....	3
Bloc. Pop.....	2
Vacant.....	2
Total.....	245

(Redistribution of seats in the House of Commons does not become effective until the present Parliament is dissolved. The House of Commons elected in the next general elections will have a membership of 255).

PARLIAMENTARY ASSISTANTS: Since last session, six parliamentary assistants to Ministers have been appointed. There are now ten parliamentary assistants, all being members of the House of Commons. They are:

R.W. Mayhew.....	To Minister of Finance
Hugues Lapointe.....	To Minister of National Defence
W.A. Tucker.....	To Minister of Veterans Affairs
G.J. McIlbraith.....	To Minister of Reconstruction and Supply
Ralph Maybank.....	To Minister of National Health and Welfare
W.E. Harris.....	To Secretary of State for External Affairs
P.E. Coté.....	To Minister of Labour
Robert McCubbin.....	To Minister of Agriculture
Gleason Belzile.....	To Minister of Finance
Robert H. Winters....	To Minister of National Revenue

(For list of Cabinet Ministers see C.W.B. December 5, Page 8).

PLAN TO SPEED WORK: Mr. Speaker Fauteux has presented a plan to speed work in the House of Commons. During the Summer, Speaker Fauteux, accompanied by Dr. Beauchesne, Clerk of the House, visited the United Kingdom and studied procedure in the Parliament at Westminster.

The United Kingdom House, Speaker Fauteux observes in his report, has gone further than us in modernizing some of its rules. Although we may take a leaf out of its book, I am aware that we have developed a parliamentary practice of our own based on British principles and yet clearly Canadian. Let me lay stress on the statement that while we appreciate the long experience of the United Kingdom House and seek to profit therefrom, we are the absolute and independent masters of our own procedure and this must be related to our circumstances and to our own needs.

Mr. Speaker further points out that it is the undoubted rights of members to alter, reject or adopt his suggestions. Until they are approved by a majority, either in their entirety or in their modified form, they have no binding power.

MAJOR SUGGESTIONS

One of the Speaker's main suggestions would divide session into three sections: (1) Oct. 25 to Christmas, (2) Christmas to Easter, (3) Easter to prorogation.

During the first sections, the House would dispose of the debate on the Address; pass non-controversial Bills; introduce and give first reading to long controversial bills and consider private members' notices of motion. During the second period, the House would take up supply and such of the Government's measures as have been given first reading. In case of urgency, other Government Bills could also be introduced and passed through all stages. During the third period, the Budget would be brought down. As Easter falls around April 1, which is the beginning of the financial year, Mr. Speaker comments, there could not be a better time for the Finance Minister to make his annual statement.

Other suggestions include:

1. Continuous sittings of the House of Commons from the time of meeting till adjournment, with suppression of the present two-hour intermission from six to eight p.m. The Speaker estimates that suppression of the intermission would save 250 hours in a session of average length.

2. That a system of teletypes be installed in offices of party leaders, cabinet ministers, whips, the press gallery, the parliamentary restaurant and cafeteria and at the main entrance to provide members with a summary of proceedings during unavoidable absences from the chamber.

3. That once a debate has lasted more than two days the speaking time of private members be cut from 40 to 20 minutes if they have no text and to 10 minutes if they read from a text.

4. That speeches, when the Commons forms itself into a committee of the whole house, be limited to 20 minutes.