

to us on September 29, 1947. This note was accompanied by a statement in which the circumstances leading to the loss of the treasures were outlined and in which a formal request was made that legal proceedings be initiated to apprehend those responsible for the removal of the treasures. A request was also made for action by the police authorities to locate the objects themselves. The statement further requested that steps be taken to prevent the missing articles or any part of them from being removed from Canada.

**RCMP REQUESTED TO UNDERTAKE SEARCH**

I replied to his communication that, while the Government of Canada had no responsibility for the safekeeping of these treasures, it had been decided, in order to assist the Government of Poland in the recovery of the missing objects and since efforts to bring about the return of the treasures by agreement have not been successful, to request the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to undertake a search in an effort to ascertain the location of the missing articles.

As regards the request that legal proceedings be initiated against those in possession, or thought to be in possession, of the missing property, the Polish Charge d'Affaires was advised that the Government of Poland was at perfect liberty to proceed itself in this matter through the Canadian courts.

In the note to the Polish Charge d'Affaires attention was also drawn to the inaccurate statements concerning the treasures which had been appearing in the Polish press, some of which were attributed to officials of the Foreign Ministry. It was pointed out that the Department of External Affairs had been glad to lend its assistance to the representative of Poland in Canada in order to secure the earliest possible return of the treasures to Poland. It was therefore regretted that these efforts had been incorrectly interpreted to the people of Poland and the hope was expressed that steps would be taken by the Polish Government to correct misapprehensions which had arisen as a result of reports originating in Poland.

What was done afterwards appears from the following statement issued to the Press last night by the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police:

"On December 2, 1947, the Minister of External Affairs requested the Minister of Justice to instruct the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to ascertain the then location of the missing Polish Art Treasures and further, if the missing articles were located, to endeavour to keep the same under surveillance until a decision could be reached as to what action might be taken by the Polish Legation.

The Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police was so instructed and in January 1948, was in a position to report that a por-

tion of the treasure consisting of 23 trunks and one box had been located stored in Hotel Dieu, Quebec City, a hospital and church institution. The trunks and box had previously been stored in the Redemptorist Monastery at Ste. Anne de Beaupre, Que.

When information was received by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police that the articles had been removed to the Hotel Dieu, a competent and experienced non-commissioned officer, Corporal J.R.R. Carriere, accompanied by another member of the police, Constable Houle, interviewed the Mother Superior in charge of the institution, stating that they had been requested to locate the missing Polish Art Treasures.

The Mother Superior on learning the purpose of the visit quite readily informed the members of the police that the treasures were still in the basement of the convent and offered to show them to the members. The offer was accepted and the room containing the treasures was visited by the two members of the police, accompanied by the Mother Superior and her assistant.

It was the Mother Superior who directed the police through the cloister, although in fact the police offered to proceed to the basement by an outside entrance.

**RCMP MAKE NO DEMAND TO ENTER**

The purpose of the interview was to seek information and the RCMP made no demand to enter, much less was there any suggestion that they had a right to search. They were received most courteously by the Mother Superior.

At a later date Inspector Rene J. Belec again interviewed the Mother Superior and was received in a most co-operative and understanding manner.

The police were fully aware that there was a dispute as to the rightful ownership or possession of the articles and the Commissioner of the Police had specifically instructed that they should be treated as missing property and that no demand could be made to produce the property nor if located should any seizure action be taken.

As to the statement to which I referred yesterday as having been handed to me just before I came into the House and as being so extraordinary in its terms and inaccurate in its assertions that I wished to ascertain whether or not it really had been made before dealing with it, I have now found that it was made and I must repeat that it contains many assertions which are not true. Thus in the first paragraph it is said that a short while ago members of the Federal Police without search warrants and in an illegal manner, forced their entrance not only into the Convent of the Sisters of the Hotel-Dieu but also into their cloister.

This is an untrue statement and honourable members will have seen in this morning's papers that the Reverend Mother Superior of the Con-

vent has given it a dignified but no less unqualified denial. I think her statement should also be made a part of their record. As reported in the Press, it is as follows:

"A few months ago we were asked to receive from a very respectable gentleman of Polish nationality and to safeguard parcels containing, we were then told, articles of art and value.

"In order to oblige we accepted the task and the packages were brought here. Things remained thus for a while and we took all care possible of the deposit in our custody to ensure their safety.

"During the month of February another gentleman, also of Polish nationality, under the title of agent for the Polish Republic, claimed that said parcels should be entrusted to him.

"Informed of this task, the first person, who had put the deposit in our charge, strictly forbade us to give the said parcels away; he strengthened his order by reminding us that according to law we were not allowed to remit the deposit in question - a deposit in trust - to anyone but himself, and ordered the removal of the parcels to the Provincial Museum.

"We then addressed ourselves to the Prime Minister of the Province of Quebec, who consented to the transportation of the aforementioned articles to the museum. We believed the museum a safe place for the valuables.

"We are willing to admit that our religious community had no reasons at all to permit a trial between the two gentlemen in question to implicate us. The Provincial Government, on its part, had told us of its intention to conform itself to the tribunal's decision.

"We want it noted and understood that there was never a 'saisie' (seizure) in our monastery by the Provincial Government, and that the deposit was never at any time under the protection of the R.C.M.P.

"We accepted the deposit in good faith and we returned it according to instructions received from the person who had entrusted the valuables to our care in the first place."

**NO VIOLATION OF CLOISTERS**

The suggestion in Mr. Duplessis' statement that there was a violation of the cloister is quite ridiculous. His statement further says:

"We are much grieved that the Federal authorities of our country, particularly the Ministers representing the province of Quebec in the country's government, made themselves the collaborators of Stalin and his Polish government to the point that they ordered their police to ignore the laws and to violate the cloister of that noble Order."

When one notes this clumsy but deliberate attempt to smear the Ministers representing the province of Quebec in the country's government and remembers that he is preparing for a provincial election, one can only deplore that Mr. Duplessis should expect such tactics to win for him anything but contempt.

The statement goes on to say that the government of the province of Quebec "has seized and impounded these treasures." This is what the Federal government had been asked to do but had refused to do, informing those who made the request that in this country the executive government did not seize and impound objects to which there were disputing claimants; that all we could do would be to ascertain if possible where the objects were and the disputing claimants would then have to resort to the Courts for an adjudication upon their rights if they saw fit to do so.

Now whatever may be the views of individuals with respect to the present government of Poland, it is and it has been for over two years the legal government of that country recognized as such by all civilized nations, and the Federal authorities have never felt and do not feel that they are acting as "accomplices" of that government in saying to it as they would say to the government of any other sovereign State that it is free to resort to Courts of Canada to assert and enforce any rights it may have as such to property actually situated in Canada.

**CZECHOSLOVAK MINISTER RESIGNS:** The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. St. Laurent, informed the House of Commons, March 3, that he had received letters informing him of the resignation of Frantisek Nemecek, minister plenipotentiary for Czechoslovakia in Canada and also of the resignations of Dr. Vladimir Moudry, first secretary, Dr. Karel Bala, commercial attaché and Miss Alzbeta Katzova and Miss Eva Blumenscheinova, both office secretaries at the Czechoslovakia legation.

**BARLEY, OATS PRICES SUPPORTED:** The Minister of Trade and Commerce, Mr. Howe, made the following statement in the House of Commons, March 1:

At this time, I wish to make a statement that will be of interest to the producers of oats and barley.

During the current crop season support prices for both oats and barley are in effect and the Government intend to extend these to July 31st, 1949, at the same support levels prevailing this crop year.

Oats will continue to be supported at levels based on 61½ cents for Number One Feed Oats, in store Fort-William/Port Arthur, with other grades at appropriate differentials to be fixed from time to time by the Wheat Board.