

Inquiries of the Ministry

whether, when he made his speech in Toronto, he was aware of the fact that General MacArthur was going to be dismissed?

Mr. Pearson: I can answer that question very quickly—and I am glad to have the opportunity to answer it, because of reports which have appeared in the press. I had no knowledge whatever of General MacArthur's dismissal before that dismissal was announced in the newspapers.

CHINA**REPORTED ARREST OF FIVE MISSIONARY SISTERS
BY CHINESE COMMUNISTS**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Lomer Brisson (Saguenay): I should like to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. I have given him notice of my question. Has the government taken any action with regard to the imprisonment of five Canadian sisters in Canton?

Hon. L. B. Pearson (Secretary of State for External Affairs): The hon. gentleman was good enough to give me notice of this question, which deals with a matter on which other hon. members have already expressed considerable interest, notably the hon. member for Charlevoix (Mr. Maltais) and the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton). When they brought the matter to my attention last week I told them that I was not at that time in a position to comment, but I am able to make a short statement concerning it now, and I shall be glad to do so. That statement will also, Mr. Speaker, in part at least, cover the question on today's order paper in the name of the hon. member for Chicoutimi (Mr. Gagnon).

The Canadian government has learned with grave concern that five Canadian nuns of the Order of the Immaculate Conception, who have been operating with selfless devotion an orphanage in Canton, have been detained and that their orphanage has been taken over by communist Chinese authorities. The most atrocious and fantastic crimes have been attributed to the five sisters by press reports and radio broadcasts emanating from China. The Canadian government deeply regrets that irresponsible accusations which, it is sure, are unfounded have been given so much publicity.

In the absence of a Canadian diplomatic mission in China the Canadian government has availed itself of the good offices of the United Kingdom chargé d'affaires in Peking. This officer has been informed of the great concern of the Canadian government for the

five sisters and has assured us that he will lose no opportunity to do anything he can to help them.

There is no evidence that formal charges have so far been laid by the Chinese authorities. The agitation against the five sisters at the present time seems to be chiefly local. As I have already said, it is inconceivable that they could be considered guilty of the crimes which they are alleged to have committed, and the local communist officials must surely know this. I hope, therefore, that the central people's government will allow the sisters to return freely to Canada.

It may take considerable time before the case of these sisters can be cleared up, and the Canadian government is anxious that nothing should be done or said at this time which could conceivably worsen their position.

I should like once again to assure the house that the government is doing everything it can to watch over the interests of these five unjustly accused sisters, and to assure the house further that everything is being done and will be done which will help them without increasing the danger to them.

FISHERIES**QUOTA ON SHIPMENTS OF LOBSTERS TO THE
UNITED KINGDOM**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. Chester S. McLure (Queens): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask a question of the Minister of Fisheries (Mr. Mayhew) or, in his absence, his parliamentary assistant. Perhaps the parliamentary assistant would take my question as a notice and give an answer tomorrow. What is the quota to the United Kingdom on the shipment of lobsters for the year 1951? Is the quota based on cases or on dollar value?

Mr. Speaker: As the hon. member does not expect an answer today, I suggest that the question be placed on the order paper. May I also say at this time that a number of the questions that are being asked on the orders of the day are quite long. Questions on the orders of the day should be urgent; they should be brief and should require only short answers. I would ask hon. members to try to observe the rules in this matter.

Mr. McLure: My question was short, and I supposed it would have been answered if the Minister of Fisheries had been here.

Mr. Speaker: Probably the hon. member's question was no more out of order than some of the others. In his case the parliamentary assistant, who is here, might take the question as a notice and answer it tomorrow.