

(4) Consular archives are being treated in accordance with usual practice as immune.

1060.

*Mé morandum*<sup>1</sup>

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CONFIDENTIAL

September 4, 1939

*Enquiry from the French Legation as to possibility of cooperation by way of information given to French Consuls in Canada on location of ships (mainly French ships situated near or in Canadian waters)*

M. de Lageneste raised this question yesterday noon without, however, making his point quite clear. He called again at the Office this morning and, from further information given by him, the French Foreign Office a few days ago instructed their Consul, Mr. Croy, at Quebec, to seek information on the position of a French merchant vessel in the vicinity, and Mr. Croy apparently tried to obtain the information in question in Quebec but could make no headway as no Canadian officials appear to have authority to give any information on this subject.

M. de Lageneste saw the Deputy Minister of Transport yesterday, who told him that, according to the regulations, information of this nature was not to be communicated to representatives of any foreign power and that, if an exception is going to be made in the case of France under the circumstances, the Department of Transport should receive instructions to that effect from the Department of External Affairs.

M. de Lageneste added that, if such information could be communicated to their Consuls by way of cooperation under the circumstances, there would likely be no danger of this information, when transmitted by the Consuls to the French authorities, being effectively intercepted by the Germans as the French Consuls use a special code or cypher, the key of which is not likely yet to be known by the Germans, and which in any case changes from time to time as may be necessitated by new circumstances.

Towards the end of the conversation, M. de Lageneste put the matter in a more general form when he intimated that, assuming that Canada is at present, or will be after Parliament meets, in a state of war, a system of cooperation for the exchange of information might be useful to Canada and France.

With reference to the case of the vessel in connection with which Mr. Croy was trying to get information, M. de Lageneste said that the purpose, of course, of the request was the protection of French vessel in question and the safety of life involved therein.

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<sup>1</sup> De/by L. Beaudry.