

## ENVOY TO CHINESE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, Mr. Mitchell Sharp, recently announced the appointment of Mr. Ralph Edgar Collins as Canada's first Ambassador to the People's Republic of China.

Mr. Collins who was born in Yunnanfu (now Kunming), China, joined the Department of External Affairs in 1940. He has served in Chungking, Washington, London, Moscow, and as the Ambassador to the Republic of South Africa. In Ottawa he has served as head of the European Division, the Far Eastern Division and the African and Middle Eastern Division. Since 1965, he has been Assistant Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Mr. Huang Hua is the first Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Canada.

## TAX CUT URGED ON FOREIGN BOOKS

Action to reduce the prices of foreign books in Canada by abolishing some of the import restrictions built into the copyright law was recommended recently in a report to the Federal Government by the Economic Council of Canada.

One survey indicated, the Council said, that the prices of a sample of British books purchased and posted to Canada directly from British bookstores were, on the average, 30 percent lower than the retail prices of the same books purchased from a Canadian bookstore. It was suggested that this difference went well beyond what could reasonably be expected as a result of the higher costs of distributing books to a dispersed Canadian market.

## COPYRIGHT LAW CRITICIZED

This situation results in part, the Council said, from sections in the copyright law that can be used to protect publishers who distribute foreign books in Canada from price competition by prohibiting others from importing the same copyright works in volume. By acquiring the Canadian copyright on the works of foreign authors, usually by acting as agents for parent firms abroad or for other foreign publishers, the Canadian publishers are able to price and distribute these books without the threat of large-scale competition.

Such practices had been defended in the past, the Council observed, on the ground that the profits from this agency business were needed for the "cross-subsidization" of Canadian literature. The Council said that the fostering of Canadian cultural identity and the maintenance of a healthy Canadian publishing industry were important national objectives but that keeping up the prices of foreign books was a poor way of trying to achieve them - a way even more objectionable on cultural than on economic grounds.

The Council asked how it furthered the education of Canadian young people and the development of

Canadian culture and civilization, which still depended heavily on effective links with their nearer foreign relations, to place so high a private tax on an important part of their reading matter.

## TIME FOR CHANGE

The Council said it was time for public policy to strive to bring down the prices of foreign books in Canada. More effective ways of supporting Canadian literature could be found. The Federal Government, for example, could help the publishing industry to explore the possibility of developing an independent network facility for the distribution of authorized photocopies and other short-run materials produced to order. This would help to alleviate the infringement of copyright by the photocopier and provide enlarged markets to authors and publishers.

Touching on recent issues in Canadian publishing, the Council said that, while it had closely examined the economic aspects of copyright, it recognized that Canadians wanted a strong and distinctive cultural identity. The Council said it assumed that, while Canadians were willing to pay some price for this special identity, they wanted Canadian creative works to be not only Canadian but good.

"To reduce the matter to a concrete example, any decision-maker responsible for foisting upon Canadian students a third-rate textbook simply because it is written and produced in Canada should consider himself overdue for an interview with his conscience and a careful contemplation of the long forward shadow cast by the quality of education.... Low-grade cultural parochialism does no service to the cause of a durable and creative Canadian nationalism - quite the contrary."

## CANADA-GERMANY SOCIAL SECURITY PACT

A convention on social security involving Canada and the Federal Republic of Germany, which was signed recently in Ottawa, will come into force as soon as it is ratified by both countries. Mr. John Munro, Minister of National Health and Welfare, signed for Canada, and Ministerialdirektor Professor Dr. Kurt Jantz of the German Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs signed for Germany.

"The convention is an important advance in securing for Canadians of German origin the social security rights they earned before coming to Canada," Mr. Munro said. "Under the convention there will be, for the first time, reciprocity between our two countries in social security matters. Up to now Germany has taken the position that it could not pay pensions earned in Germany to former Germans who had become Canadian citizens. The convention provides that German pensions can be paid in Canada to Canadians as well as to German citizens."

The convention is the result of lengthy negotia-