

Contributions to Britain

When my hon. friend goes on to ask me what I am going to do with respect to any expression of view which may be made by the people in connection with any reference which will be made to them, may I say to him that in seeking to get relief from past commitments I am not going to begin by making new and fresh commitments. In seeking freedom on the part of the ministry I am not going to start in by seeking to tie my own hands.

That is the answer to that part of the question.

My hon. friend asked a further question, whether there was any understanding between myself and Mr. Godbout, express or implied, as to the position which I would take as a result of any plebiscite that would be presented to the people. May I say to him that there is no understanding, express or implied, with Mr. Godbout or with any other person on earth with respect to the attitude that I propose to take after the people have expressed their views with regard to giving the government a free hand.

May I add that such attitude as I shall take at the time will be taken in the light of all the circumstances as I may know them as a member of the government, and of all conditions as I know them in regard to this country and, as far as I am able to know something about them, conditions in other countries as well.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO BRITAIN

WAR SUPPLIES, FOOD, AND LOAN WITHOUT INTEREST—ACKNOWLEDGMENT BY MR. CHURCHILL

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING (Prime Minister): May I be permitted to give the house a little information which I have received this morning. Yesterday, as the house will recall, I made known an offer which the Canadian government was making to the British government with respect to materials, munitions, food and other supplies during the year, and the assumption on the part of Canada of the financial obligations which that offer would involve.

I have received to-day through the High Commissioner of the United Kingdom a statement of the exact words used by Prime Minister Churchill in the House of Commons this morning accepting that offer. I wish to read to the house the Prime Minister's statement. Mr. Churchill said:

Having crossed the Atlantic it was plainly my duty to visit the great dominion of Canada. The house will have read with admiration and deep interest the speech made by the Prime Minister of Canada yesterday on Canada's great and growing contribution to the common

[Mr. Mackenzie King.]

cause in men, in money and in materials. A notable part of the contribution is the financial offer which the Canadian government have made to this country. The sum involved is one billion Canadian dollars, about £225,000,000. I know the house will wish me to convey to the government of Canada our lively appreciation of their kind and most generous offer, unequalled in its scale in the whole history of the British empire, and it is a convincing proof of the determination of Canada to make her maximum contribution to the successful prosecution of the war.

I also received this morning from the Prime Minister of Great Britain a cable directed to myself, to which I have been informed publicity may also be given. I shall therefore read this cabled message, which is from Mr. Churchill to myself as from Prime Minister to Prime Minister:

Reports have just reached me of the most generous and far reaching financial proposals which you have outlined to-day in the House of Commons at Ottawa. I recall your memorable words at the Mansion House when you said, "We in Canada are proud to share your burdens. We are determined to share them to the utmost of our strength." Canada under your leadership has given many proofs of that determination in every field of our common endeavour, and I have recently been fortunate enough to see for myself the spirit that inspires you all. Parliament and the people of this country will share my feelings of profound gratitude and encouragement. At this time when the utmost efforts of every nation are required for victory you have again made plain to the world that all the resources and energies of Canada are to be counted upon in support of the fight for freedom.

PAN-AMERICAN CONFERENCE

PROPOSED CREATION OF FREE INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGE CURRENCY—CANADA'S POSITION

On the orders of the day:

Mr. VICTOR QUELCH (Acadia): On January 21, 1942, there appeared in the *Edmonton Journal* an account of the scheme to be submitted to the Rio conference. Section 2 of the proposal, as outlined in the article reads:

Creation of a free international exchange currency to facilitate flow of goods and prevent delay in transactions. It would be on a gold basis and in addition to the American nations, Great Britain, China, the Netherlands, India and all British dominions would enter into the agreement. A pool of allied gold holdings would be created. The Latin American countries would agree to peg their national currencies into the free international exchange currency.

I wish to ask the Prime Minister whether the Canadian government has made any commitments in this regard. If the answer is in the negative, then I would ask: has the Canadian government directly or indirectly