

(A) INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATIONS AND AGREEMENTS1. Agreement between Canada and the U.S.S.R. for an Exchange of Consular representatives, statement by Prime Minister, February 5, 1942.

A few days ago the hon. member for Rosetown-Biggart (Mr. Coldwell) asked the following question:

1. What decision has the government reached regarding the recognition of our present ally the U.S.S.R.?
2. If recognition has been decided upon, will the government exchange representatives with the Soviet Union?

I explained the reasons at the time why it was not possible to give an immediate answer to the question. I am now in a position to give the house the following information:

De facto recognition of the U.S.S.R. was accorded by the United Kingdom government following the signature of a trade agreement at London on March 16, 1921. Canada adhered to this agreement on July 3, 1922, from which date extends Canada's de facto recognition of the U.S.S.R.

On February 1, 1924, the United Kingdom government granted de jure recognition to the U.S.S.R., while formal recognition by Canada may be dated from March 24, 1924, at which time a communication from the Canadian government was forwarded to the government of the U.S.S.R., stating that Canada was prepared to recognize the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics.

Up to the present time, therefore, the Canadian government has maintained diplomatic and commercial relations with Russia in exactly the same way as is done with many other countries with whom direct diplomatic relations have not yet been established, that is, through the British diplomatic and consular services.

In reply to the second part of this question I would like to inform the house that an agreement was signed in London to-day at 3 p.m. London time between the government of Canada and the government of the U.S.S.R., providing for the exchange of consular representatives between the two countries. The Canadian High Commissioner in London, the Right Hon. Vincent Massey, signed on behalf of Canada, and the Russian ambassador, M. Maisky, signed on behalf of the U.S.S.R.

I may say that it is the belief of the government that the establishment of direct relations, pursuant to this agreement, will greatly facilitate the solution of common problems arising out of the war efforts of our two countries.