

which he believed to be one of service to the empire, that we felt no stone should be left unturned to see to it that his life would be rescued and spared, as at the time, we believed was still possible. Since then I have met Allan Crawford's parents and talked with them. They have gathered all the information that it is possible to get with respect to the government's action and the action of others in this matter, and they are firmly convinced that, on the part of the government, there was no neglect in any particular. Indeed, I have in my hand a letter which was written to me by Mrs. Crawford shortly after the debate which took place in this House last session. So anxious were the parents of young Crawford to be present in parliament when this discussion came up, that I was asked by them if I would send them some word when the debate on the Wrangel island question was likely to take place on the estimates. Unfortunately I was not in the House at the moment the estimates came up, and I failed to send that word to them. I received then this letter which speaks for itself. The letter is from Mrs. Crawford, the boy's mother; it is marked "personal," but I think it now has a public interest.

168 Walmer Road,  
Toronto, April 9, 1924.

Hon. W. L. MACKENZIE KING,  
Prime Minister,  
Ottawa, Ont.

Dear Mr. KING:

We were disappointed that the discussion of the Wrangel island question came up so incidentally that there was not time for you to send us notice.

Our newspapers contain only the briefest reports of the debate. We wondered if any special reference had been made to our son, Allan Crawford, and that he had died in the belief that he was doing a service for the empire. Is there likely to be any further discussion regarding Wrangel?

Mr. Stefansson has claimed repeatedly that the relief ship "Teddy Bear" sailed a month too late in 1922 owing to your government's delay in supplying the \$3,000, thus implying that government delay was the cause of the Wrangel island tragedy. The enclosed statement by Captain Joseph Bernard proves that the sailing was not too late, and that therefore your government was not to blame for the tragedy.

I am,

Yours sincerely,

HELEN CRAWFORD.

I am sorry that among the papers I have here there does not appear to be the clipping to which the letter makes reference, but as I recall it, it was a cutting containing an interview with one who was in a position to know, which confirmed very strongly the view expressed in the letter I have just read from young Crawford's mother. I think if the parents of this heroic young man, who gave his life in the service of the empire [Mr. Mackenzie King.]

just as truly as any of the great explorers and adventurers have given their lives in the service of mankind, feel that the government of his country was in no way negligent as regards the relief that was sent, this parliament can well afford to take the same view.

If there is aught remaining to be done it is to acknowledge the great patriotism of this young lad who undoubtedly was actuated by the highest motives, who showed exceptional courage and daring, and who I feel deserves at the hands of the country some expression of honour to his memory. That expression I should like to see given in the form of a public tablet erected in an appropriate place. I think that a deed of heroic courage of this character should certainly not pass unnoticed. I should add, seeing that the parents of this young lad, having viewed the matter from all sides, consider that the country has been true to their son that it would be most unseemly for any further question concerning the effort made to effect his rescue, to be raised in this House.

Mr. MEIGHEN: I did not know either the boy himself or his parents, nor have I met his parents nor heard from them since; nor had I heard indirectly any expression of their views in the matter until the letter was read this evening. Not only is this the fact, but I did not come to the debate with any idea in my mind that any blame attached to the government. I had not heard outside that any such blame was to be ascribed to anyone. I came rather in quite the contrary spirit; I pursued my questions merely with a view to ascertaining the history of the whole matter, and on the point covered by the letter I would not for a moment attach any blame. I never suggested that the expedition left too late, nor had I known of anyone else having made such a suggestion. I think the government was fully justified in the help it gave and I am glad it gave that help promptly to the expedition. The letter does not touch the point as to why the expedition was not followed up. There may have been reasons why it was not, but they have not been disclosed in the debate; and I should like the minister, possibly at a later date, to improve his recollection of the events, to look up the records, and to consult with those who had more closely to do with the matter in order to find out what explanation there is. At first sight it would seem to me at any rate as if, having started out on something of such great human consequence, it was natural that the officers concerned should see to it that the expedition was not wholly abandoned. And apparently, so far as the government is