

PRESS RELEASE

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

OTTAWA - CANADA

No.32

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FRIDAY, MAY 8, 1953

Following are the texts of Notes that have been exchanged between the Polish Legation in Ottawa and the Department of External Affairs:

Ottawa, April 17, 1953

The Legation of the People's Republic of Poland presents its compliments to the Canadian Department of External Affairs and, under instructions from its Government, has the honour to communicate the following:

On April 10, 11 and 12, 1953, there took place in Ottawa a meeting of an organization called the Polish Veterans' Association. It is a matter of public knowledge that this organization is only a cloak for a gang of traitors to the Polish nation, conducting a vast campaign of espionage and diversion against the Polish State. This organization is run by notorious political adventurers with Anders and Sosnkowski at their head. Their activity is characterized by plots and provocations in the international arena.

On April 9 of this year, that is on the eve of the opening of the meeting referred to, the Charge d'Affaires of the Polish Republic drew to the attention of Mr. L.D. Wilgress, Acting Under-Secretary of State for External Affairs, the provocative and aggressive character of the demonstration, and protested against the open participation in it of the official representatives of the Canadian Government.

In spite of this, members of the Canadian Government, Mr. Walter Harris, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and Mr. Hughes Lapointe, Minister of Veterans' Affairs, as well as General Charles Foulkes, Chairman of the Canadian Chiefs of Staff Committee, took part in this demonstration whose purpose was to cause trouble between Canada and Poland. It should be noted, moreover, that Mr. Walter Harris attended the meeting as representative of the Prime Minister of Canada.

The official support given by the Canadian Government to this anti-Polish demonstration had immediate effects: on the night of April 12 to 13, 1953, unruly elements removed from the Legation building a plate bearing the emblem of the Polish State.

The Polish Government holds the Canadian Government responsible for creating the circumstances in which criminal elements, encouraged by the attitude of the

Canadian Government, were able with impunity to desecrate the emblem of the Polish State.

The Polish Government demands that an immediate inquiry be held and that the offenders be punished for this crime.

At the same time, the Polish Government demands that the Canadian Government should cease the practice of supporting elements hostile to Poland in view of the fact that such a practice is contrary to the principles that form the basis of international relations.

The Legation expects to be informed without delay of the results of the inquiry and of the punishment of the offenders.

Ottawa, May 1, 1953.

The Department of External Affairs presents its compliments to the Legation of the People's Republic of Poland, and has the honour to refer to the Legation's Note of April 17, 1953, concerning a Convention of Polish veterans resident in Canada which took place in Ottawa on April 10, 11 and 12. The Legation's Note also informs the Department of External Affairs that on the night of April 12, 13 a plaque bearing the coat of arms of Poland was removed from the Legation building.

The Department of External Affairs regrets the theft of the coat of arms from the Legation building, and the police authorities were at once notified and requested to take every step to identify those responsible and to recover the missing property. The Department of External Affairs was glad to learn subsequently from the police that the plaque had been recovered undamaged and had been returned to the Legation, and it is understood that the Legation requested that the police investigation should be terminated.

With respect to the remainder of the Legation's Note, the Department of External Affairs cannot accept the suggestion that it was in any way improper for Canadian Ministers or Government officials to address a convention of war veterans in Canada who happen to be of Polish origin. Those who attended the convention are residents of this country and most of them are Canadian citizens or have applied, under our law, to become citizens. Moreover, as representatives of the valiant Polish Army, with which Canadian troops fought side by side in our common struggle against oppression during the last war, these veterans are honoured in Canada as comrades-in-arms.

The Department of External Affairs rejects the suggestions that the Government of Canada is in any way responsible for the circumstances in which the theft of Legation property took place, and that the attendance of Canadian Ministers at the convention in question could be construed as support for the enemies of Poland.

(Signed) L. D. Wilgress.