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CANADIAN POLITICAL AFFAIRS: Reports by H.M. Representative.

Report for mid-March to mid-April, 1945.

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POLITICAL REPORT

MID-MARCH to MID-APRIL

I. FEDERAL POLITICS

1. Parliament.

The sixth session of Parliament opened on 19th March and closed on the 16th April. The Speech from the Throne was a record for brevity. The principal proceedings were the voting of supplies for the period up to the opening of the new Parliament and the debating of a resolution endorsing Canadian participation in the San Francisco Conference.

2. San Francisco Debate

The Prime Minister's resolution approving in general the purposes and principles set forth in the Dumbarton Oaks proposals was passed by the House of Commons on the 28th March with a vote of 202 to 5. The five opposing votes were from Independent members from Quebec carrying little weight and it may be noted that they received no support from the Bloc Populaire members, who voted for the resolution.

Differences of opinion which emerged in the course of the debate were mainly concerned with the question of Canada's status as a member of the Commonwealth and of her rights and responsibilities in international affairs; the views of the main Opposition parties on the substance of the Dumbarton Oaks proposals showed little divergence from the Government.

In opening the debate the Prime Minister stressed two main points in the Canadian Government's attitude; first, that the method of selection to the Council should have due regard for the power and the responsibilities of secondary states; and, secondly, that states not represented on the Council should not be called upon to take action without either an opportunity of participation in the Council's proceedings or specific agreement to cooperate in implementing the Council's decisions. With regard to the Yalta decision on voting, the Prime Minister said that it represented an achievement of substantial unity which it would be foolish to reject outright, but that there was reason to keep an open mind on the point. He also emphasized that Canada would not be committed to any charter without the approval of Parliament.

As regards Canada's voice in international affairs, Government spokesmen took the line that, without prejudice to her close association with the other members of the British Commonwealth, her position as a "middle power" should be recognized and that the Commonwealth should not be treated as a political entity. Challenging this stand, Conservative members accused the Prime Minister of contracting out of the Commonwealth, and of weakening the position of

Canada/

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other companies, such as the Canadian Pacific Railway, should be re-examined, alleging that there had been "maladministration of Saskatchewan resources" by the Dominion Government. The issue has been previously raised on several occasions and a Royal Commission on National Resources recommended that the Dominion Government should pay the Saskatchewan Government $5 million in full settlement. This was not however, accepted by the Saskatchewan Government. The Hudson's Bay Company has so far made no comment on the Minister's statement.

A bill introduced by the C.C.F. Government to establish Crown companies to take over and operate "lands and works" was approved by the Saskatchewan Legislature after a heated six weeks debate. The small Liberal opposition have bitterly opposed the bill which has an important place in the Government's programme for industrialisation.

Controversy continues between the Federal and Provincial Governments on the question of the provincial debt to the Dominion Government incurred for seed grain advances before the war. The Saskatchewan Government has now received a copy of the Dominion Government's statement of claim to the right to deduct from Federal subsidies amounts to offset the debt. The tribunal set up to arbitrate on the right of the Dominion Government to withhold these payments to the Saskatchewan Government has now started work and will hold open hearings in May.

18. Manitoba

A licence has been granted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation for a French language broadcasting station at St. Boniface to cater to the French-speaking population of some 50,000. A campaign for funds is reported to have raised over $55,000. The appeal has had a wide response from French-speaking groups, not only in Canada, but also in the United States.

19 Nova Scotia

After two years of research the Royal Commission on Provincial Development and Rehabilitation has tabled in the Nova Scotian Legislature a report of 17 volumes on economic conditions in Nova Scotia. In spite of this intensive study of the problem of the relative industrial decline of the maritime provinces since Confederation, the Commission have been unable to put forward any new principle or practical suggestion of far-reaching scope to arrest the process.

20. British Columbia

An announcement by the British Columbia Security Commission of the steps to be taken to implement the Dominion Government's

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11. Supreme, the Union Nationale Premier.

During the course of debate in Saskatchewan, the validity of the charter of the Hudson Bay Company was questioned — The debate concluded by ~~[illegible]~~ the passing

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policy outlined last year has brought to the fore again the question of the Japanese in Canada. First, a tribunal is to be set up to consider the loyalty of Japanese-Canadians and deport those who are considered undesirable. Secondly, the Government is prepared to pay the travelling expenses of all those wishing to return to Japan after the war. Thirdly, all those who remain in Canada will be encouraged to settle east of the Rockies.

This statement has caused concern in other Provinces. The Provincial Governments, who agreed to accept Japanese from British Columbia as a temporary war measure, claim that they should be consulted before any definite step is taken by the Federal authorities. The Premiers of Ontario and Manitoba have made expostulatory statements and the Premier of Quebec has gone so far as to say that the Quebec Government would take the "necessary steps" to prevent the Japanese from settling in the Province. The Premier of Saskatchewan on the other hand, has agreed that it is a Federal problem and declared his Government's readiness to co-operate in any plan "acceptable to Canada as a whole".

VI. MISCELLANEOUS

21. The Governor-General

It has been announced that the Governor-General will return to the United Kingdom early in the summer on the termination of his period of office.

22. Visits

Sir Robert Watson-Watt visited Ottawa in March for further discussion with the Canadian authorities on the use of radio in civil aviation.

Sir Walter Citrine visited Montreal en route to Washington and San Francisco.

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