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BRITISH EMBASSY,
WASHINGTON D.C.

No. 1061.

September 15th 1939.

My Lord,

I have the honour to inform Your Lordship that at his regular press conference on September 12th the President was invited to comment on a statement which had apparently been issued on the previous day in London by the Ministry of Information in regard to certain passages in the speech which he made at Kingston on August 18th, 1938. You will recollect that in this speech, the full text of which was enclosed in Sir Ronald Lindsay's despatch No. 750 of August 20th 1938, President Roosevelt, when referring to the common interests of the United States and Canada and the ties which bound them together, declared "I give to you assurance that the people of the United States will not stand idly by if domination of Canadian soil is threatened by any other Empire".

2. It would seem, according to the local newspapers, that the Ministry of Information issued a statement to the effect that "The Monroe Doctrine as extended or interpreted by the statement made last year at Kingston by President Roosevelt on the interest of the United States in the preservation of the integrity of Canada from invasion places Canada in a special position". To a question on the subject the President is reported to have declared/

The Right Honourable

VALM:PRHM: MS

The Viscount Halifax, K.G.,

etc., etc., etc.

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declared that the fact that Canada had declared war against Germany did not alter his pledge to the Dominion. He insisted, however, that this pledge should not be regarded as in any way extending the Monroe Doctrine beyond its original scope. He went on, after giving an historical sketch of the situation at the time when President Monroe made his famous declaration, to point out that this had always been regarded as applying not only to the countries in South and Central America which had revolted and set up their own independence but also to those islands or areas on the continent over which certain European powers continued to exercise sovereignty. The Monroe Doctrine, the President pointed out, applied not only to the American Republics but equally to British Honduras, British, French and Dutch Guiana, the British and French West Indies and even to the island of St. Pierre and Miquelon at the mouth of the St. Lawrence.

3. The President explained that European sovereignty over these places had always been "accepted" because no difficulties had ever arisen, but he inferred that should any attempt be made now or later on to alter the status quo or transfer sovereignty to any other European power the United States would regard this as an infringement of the Monroe Doctrine.

4. An English journalist who attended this press conference tells me that it was quite evident that the President had this question "planted" with one of the reliable regular White House reporters, and the inference drawn/

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drawn by the journalists present was that Mr. Roosevelt was anxious to have a chance of emphasising his sympathy with Canada at a time when the press is drawing a lot of attention to the handicap imposed on the Dominion by the mandatory application to it of the Neutrality Act.

5. I am sending a copy of this despatch to the High Commissioner for the United Kingdom in Canada.

I have the honour to be,

with the highest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

humble servant,

(SGD) LOTHIAN.