

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, the observations by the Prime Minister make it rather difficult for another statement to be made, because the particular statement he made to the house should have been made on motions. I am not objecting to that fact at the moment, but I hope the same freedom will be accorded hon. members in other parts of the house.

I want to follow up, not the personal dispute between the Prime Minister and the premier of British Columbia as to veracity, but a statement made yesterday in answer to a question directed to the Prime Minister regarding Senator Gélinas. I asked the Prime Minister the following question as it appears on page 11713 of *Hansard*:

In view of the reports in the press that in this case—

That was the Stonehill case in question.

—Senator Gélinas was consulted by the department of immigration, may I ask if the senator was connected in any way with that department?

The Prime Minister replied in this way:

These reports, of course, as they appear in the press do not bear out in any way what my hon. friend has said. Senator Gélinas was not concerned with this matter.

Now, sir, I point out that evidence was given before the Dorion commission by Mr. Denis—

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Diefenbaker: This is not dealing with the commission and its report.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. This is a question period, and the right hon. gentleman has asked for certain leeway which normally I suppose the Chair, as a matter of courtesy to the right hon. leader of a great party, would grant. However, when we begin to discuss evidence given before a commission, even though that commission is not of the same nature as a court nevertheless the evidence is before the commissioner, I do not think it is proper to adduce that evidence or quote it in the house at this time. Perhaps the right hon. gentleman would confine himself to posing a question.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, I agree; but this is rather irregular, and the irregularity commenced when the Prime Minister made his statement at a time when it should not have been made. His statement should have been made on motions.

May I ask the Prime Minister this question. Is he aware of the fact that Mr. Denis, who occupied the position of executive as-

sistant to the minister of immigration, communicated information to those who had a right to that information, including Senator Gélinas; and was he aware of the fact, when he made his statement yesterday, that Senator Gélinas had let it be known that he wanted information about the Stonehill case and the Stonehill file? Was he aware when he made that statement yesterday that Denis called Senator Gélinas regarding this matter? Was he aware of those facts?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman presumably is basing his question on the proceedings before a judicial inquiry. All I can say is that I will look into the particular point he has raised and answer in due course.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Was the Prime Minister aware of the fact that Senator Gélinas was interested in the Stonehill case when he gave the answer he did yesterday, which was not a factual answer?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I stand by the answer I gave yesterday.

Mr. MacInnis: What are you going to look into, then?

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

VIET NAM—REPRESENTATIONS RESPECTING RECONVENING OF GENEVA CONFERENCE

On the orders of the day:

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I want to direct a question to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. In view of the statement yesterday by Dean Rusk to the effect that any negotiations at this time regarding the situation in Viet Nam would only add to the danger; and in view of the fact that other nations, particularly France, are doing everything possible to bring about some conference at which a negotiated settlement might be possible, does the minister not think it is time for Canada to get off the fence and for the minister to make a categorical statement that Canada is prepared to support such a conference and will do everything in its power to bring about a negotiated settlement?

Hon. Paul Martin (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I can well understand my hon. friend's impatience, but I would ask him to recognize that there is a difference between the position which he occupies and that which I occupy as a member of the government in respect of a situa-