

In a letter addressed to the Chairman dated Friday, April 28, 1972, the honourable Member for Yukon declined to appear, and did not appear in the three week period set in the Committee's resolution.

Therefore your Committee reports as follows:

The honourable Member for Yukon was invited to appear before the Committee to give evidence and has declined to do so, for reasons stated in the said correspondence. Your Committee consider it their duty to lay this matter before the House for direction, as it appears to your Committee to be futile to proceed in the absence of the testimony of the honourable Member for Yukon.

APPENDIX

Ottawa, March 16, 1972.

Mr. Eric Nielsen, M.P.,
Room 322 W.B.,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Sir:

The Subcommittee on Agenda and Procedure of the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, at its meeting of Thursday, March 16, 1972, has authorized me, as Chairman, to invite you to substantiate any of the allegations you have raised in the House of Commons relating to the Committee's Order of Reference which reads as follows:

"That the allegations concerning wiretapping and opening of mail of members of this House be referred to the Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections."

In order to expedite this matter, the Subcommittee would appreciate receiving all the pertinent information you may have regarding wiretapping of telephone conversations with M.P.'s and opening of mail addressed to them, before Wednesday March 22, 1972.

May I, on behalf of the Subcommittee, thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours,

Ovide Laflamme
Chairman

OL/gb

Ottawa, Ontario
March 20, 1972.

Mr. Ovide Laflamme, Chairman,
Standing Committee on Privileges
and Elections,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Laflamme:

This will acknowledge and thank you for your letter of March 16th.

Mr. Nielsen is not expected back in Ottawa before Wednesday or Thursday of this week at which time your letter will be drawn to his attention immediately.

Yours truly,

(Miss) D. M. Kelly, Secretary
to Erik Nielsen, M.P.

Ottawa, Ontario
March 28, 1972.

Mr. Ovide Laflamme, Chairman,
Standing Committee on Privileges
and Elections,
House of Commons,
Ottawa, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Laflamme:

I have received your letter of March 16, 1972. The lack of my immediate response was due to my absence from Ottawa until last Sunday.

In your letter you invite me "to substantiate any of the allegations you have raised in the House of Commons". As Chairman of the Committee I would have expected a more accurate and impartial description of the terminology used by me in the House. Permit me to reproduce it for you. On Friday, March 10, 1972 at page 710 of *Hansard* (English) appears the following:

"POSSIBILITY OF INTERCEPTION WITHIN DEPARTMENTS OF PUBLIC SERVANTS' PERSONAL MAIL DIRECTED TO MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT"

"Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. Is the government aware of any practice or policy in government departments whereby personal and private mail directed to Members of Parliament from government employees, using the internal mailing facilities of the department, is intercepted and examined by departmental or any other security personnel to the extent of opening envelopes, examining the contents and, in the case of unsigned correspondence, subjecting the envelopes and contents to fingerprint and other identification tests?"

"Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, I am not aware of any such practice. I will be happy to take my hon. friend's question as notice and have it checked out to see whether there is any substance or basis to the serious matter he is raising."

"Mr. Nielsen: Will the Acting Prime Minister consult with his colleagues, particularly with the Prime Minister, for the purpose of causing an investigation to be made of this matter in order to reassure government employees that they may communicate privately with their own Member of Parliament or any Member of Parliament in confidence and without fear, as is the right of every Canadian citizen?"