

Administration of Justice

So, sir, this reasonable request that I be allowed access to the file so that I might speak from a recent, immediate review instead of a recollection of five years ago, is refused with no adequate reason assigned.

Some hon. Members: Shame.

Mr. Fulton: Of course if there is a judicial commission the file must go to it, but allowing me to inspect it for the matter of an hour is not going to interfere with that. The only inference to be drawn from the facts is that it is all right for the Minister of Justice to make charges and accusations and innuendos without ever looking at the file, but it is not all right for the member of the opposition most immediately involved in this aspect of the case to look at the file before he replies. We are not to see it. The only inference to be drawn, and I do draw it, sir, is the inference that the file, the facts contained on the file and the facts surrounding the file refute the charges made by the Minister of Justice, and the government opposite know it.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Fulton: I suggest, sir, that the course followed by the Prime Minister in that refusal is the course of a man deficient in courtesy and courage.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the hon. member would permit a question. Would he think it would be proper for me to use information gained from this file in support of any statements I might wish to make in the house concerning this matter?

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Speaker, I would expect, but apparently it is too much to expect, that the Prime Minister or any one undertaking to make statements about the Munsinger case would look at the file before he did so, so he would know whether his statements are accurate or not.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Fulton: I am not, of course, suggesting that facts which it is improper to reveal and information it is improper to give be given, but we are entitled to discuss this file and see what it establishes within the realm of protection of police procedures. This I am denied. I hope the Prime Minister has seen the file. Obviously the Minister of Justice has not although he, as Minister of Justice, had the full right and authority to call for that file at any time, and should have done so before he made these statements.

[Mr. Fulton.]

It is a sorry situation, sir, when we have it now revealed by the attitude and the words of the Prime Minister that they prefer to make charges based on ignorance, and to smear reputations without examining documents rather than take the normal precaution of seeing whether there is any foundation in fact for what they are saying.

I am, then, in the position, sir, where I have not been able to review the file as I would like to, but nevertheless I am clear in my recollection of certain salient points and, within the limits of what it is proper for me to disclose, I intend to state what I recall of the report and the circumstances under which it came before me.

My recollection establishes that the Minister of Justice cannot substantiate his charges and cannot prove things that he is called upon to prove. My statements are made on the basis of my recollection of a report which I have seen. The minister made his statements without ever having seen the file.

The report before me in 1961, on the basis of my recollection, contained no suggestion that there had been any breach of security. It did not suggest that any security information had been sought by Mrs. Munsinger or conveyed to her. It did not allege or suggest that any offence had been committed in connection with security or any other field within federal responsibility. It did not allege or suggest any offence by any member of the federal government.

It did not state that Mrs. Munsinger was or had been engaged in espionage activities. It did not allege or suggest that she had cultivated the acquaintance of anyone with a view to obtaining security information. It did not state that she was employed by any embassy, nor was she so employed.

The activities which led to the compiling of the report which came to me had not originated as the result of any concern with security. The police had not been investigating Mrs. Munsinger with respect to security. They knew of her in other connections and checked on her from time to time in that respect. It was as a result of one of those checks that the report in question arose. It did not suggest that any person in the federal government was involved in those other areas or connections. I repeat, it did not suggest that any offence had been committed by any member of the federal government.