

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Diefenbaker: When was the telephone call?

Mr. Pearson: There were various telephone calls. There was one on Tuesday of this week from the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration to Mr. Budd, who said he would speak to the premier and phone the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration by three o'clock. The minister waited in his office until seven o'clock, I believe, but no reply came. Then again on Wednesday the minister put in a call for Mr. Budd. The operator reached his home and was advised that he had left for the office. At the office the reply was that Mr. Budd had not arrived, so the minister left word. Again there was a further effort to get a positive agreement from the government of British Columbia that there was no objection to the tabling of this correspondence.

In the circumstances, Mr. Speaker, and in view of the remarks reported to have been made yesterday by Premier Bennett to the effect he had no objection to the documents being tabled, I can now, with the consent of the house, do that. Incidentally, Mr. Bennett is reported also to have said that my statement—and this is the one referred to by the right hon. gentleman—that he had denied permission, was a falsity. If you will consult *Hansard* of yesterday you will find I made no such statement. I said I had been unable to secure from him permission, which was accurate.

Under date of May, 1964, Mr. Speaker, a member of my staff, Mr. Dornan, received a letter on the stationery of the premier of British Columbia signed "W. A. C. Bennett". This letter read as follows:

Thanks for your interest in the settlement of our friend in Canada.

Investment in secondary industries such as he proposes can be of inestimable value to the economy of British Columbia and we are most anxious to see this type of development. I understand his plans have been somewhat delayed due to uncertainty about his future, and hope this can be settled favourably as quickly as possible.

I hope you are well and enjoying life in Ottawa.

Very sincerely yours,—

Mr. Dornan, to whom this letter was addressed, had earlier been advised by Mr. A. H. Williamson of Vancouver that he had received from Premier Bennett a letter regarding Harry S. Stonehill, an applicant for landed immigrant status. Therefore this letter, when it arrived, was assumed to refer to Mr. Stonehill and was sent on by Mr.

[Mr. Pearson.]

Dornan to the office of the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration.

On February 3 of this year, following certain publicity, I received a phone call at approximately 6 p.m. from Premier Bennett in which he said the letter purporting to bear his signature was, to use his words, a phony and had no authenticity. Naturally I accepted the premier's statement. This was, however, the first indication that I, or anyone on my staff had, that the letter was not in fact from the premier of British Columbia.

The remainder of the correspondence which I would ask permission to table consists of letters and telegrams beginning with one dated February 4, 1965 from the attorney general of British Columbia, Mr. Bonner. The letter of February 4 includes a report to the attorney general from the superintendent in charge of the criminal investigation branch of the R.C.M.P. in Victoria, which was marked secret and had a report of an admission by a person who said he had written the letter and sent it without Mr. Bennett's knowledge.

The report is a communication from a police officer to the attorney general of the province in relation to the enforcement of law in that province. The R.C.M.P. act, under contract, as the provincial police in British Columbia and in that role they are responsible to the attorney general of that province.

This is a report from an officer to his superior in the course of duty. Moreover, Mr. Speaker, I have no knowledge as to whether the attorney general intends to prosecute in respect of what would appear to be a possible offence under the Criminal Code, the prosecution for which would be the constitutional responsibility of the attorney general of the province of British Columbia.

In all these circumstances, Mr. Speaker, I feel it would be improper for me to table this particular police report before this parliament. I shall, however, table the covering letter along with the other correspondence, with the exception I have indicated, namely the R.C.M.P. secret report to the attorney general of British Columbia of February 4, 1965.

I now ask, Mr. Speaker, for permission to table the exchange of correspondence by letter and telegram with the premier's office and from the attorney general of British Columbia, between February 4 and February 24 of this year, 1965.

Mr. Speaker: Does the house give consent.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.