

the department. That official came to me after one of his trips to Montreal and said that the Canadian Vickers were making changes in the vessel at the request of the Russian Government; that he did not know anything about it, and did not know what attitude he should assume in respect to the changes that were being made.

*By Mr. McKenzie:*

Q. Just at that point can you tell the committee who was representing the Russian Government on the spot and who authorized those changes?—A. Nobody; they were receiving those instructions, evidently, from London. There was nobody representing the Russian Government at that time. Things went on that way until the 1st May, when Mr. Duguid again called my attention to the fact that he was continuing to inspect this boat, that changes were being made, and that he did not know exactly where he stood in respect to the work. Not having heard anything further, I wrote a letter for transmission to the Colonial Office, through the regular channel, on the 1st of May.

Hon. Mr. REID: This letter is marked "confidential," but we will read it to the committee.

WITNESS: This letter and other correspondence here should not go into the record without first getting permission to publish it.

Mr. CARVELL: I feel like being governed by Mr. Johnston's explanation, in regard to the correspondence which is marked "confidential." Apparently there is nothing in that letter which could not go in.

WITNESS: No; only the prevailing custom of the department that this correspondence should not be published without permission.

(Letter of 1st May referred to by witness, read for information of the committee.)

WITNESS: On 15th May a reply was received.

(Reply read.)

*By Mr. McKenzie:*

Q. Do you regard that as a reply to your letter?—A. Well, that is the only reply we got.

*By Mr. Kyte:*

Q. Your letter could not have been received at that date?—It was received, because it was founded on my letter.

*By Mr. McKenzie:*

Q. They make reference to a cipher telegram?—A. Yes, founded on my letter which went to the Secretary of State as a cipher telegram.

*By Mr. Carvell:*

Q. You accept this as an answer to your letter?—A. Surely.

*By Mr. Morphy:*

Q. Do I understand then that that meant that the Russian Government were from that time dealing independently with the Vickers Company, with an independent contract?—A. That is what subsequently transpired.

Q. Then Canada was waived out?—A. Yes, and, as a matter of fact, it might just as well be stated here that the Russian Government got an entirely different ship to the ship which we contracted for to be constructed at Vickers.

Q. More expensive?—A. Infinitely more expensive, an entirely different ship.