

Major BELL: When the Government first knew about it?

The WITNESS: Yes.

Major BELL: It was about two weeks before.

The WITNESS: It was about two weeks before.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: About two weeks before the 30th of April?

The WITNESS: That is as near as I can remember it. I do not think I am very many days out in that.

*By Sir Henry Drayton:*

Q. Could you say definitely that was before that letter was signed?—A. Yes, it was.

Q. Whom did you tell? Whom did you see? Whom did you advise? Because I do not find it in writing here?—A. No, it is not in writing.

Q. Whom did you advise?—A. I have to rely somewhat on the information that Major Bell can give me,—

Major BELL: I did not get that question.

The WITNESS (to Major Bell): Did I talk to Mr. Graham about it?

Major BELL: No, I think what took place—

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: I would prefer—

The WITNESS: One minute—

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: If you cannot tell me, I am content to leave it that way—

The WITNESS: Unless I have the privilege of refreshing my memory, Sir Henry, on some things that happened over a year ago, by asking those who were in the service of the company what their recollection is, then I am being denied, I think, a reasonable privilege. I cannot carry all the details in my head.

Sir HENRY DRAYTON: It is not a detail; it is a matter, rather, of importance, when you told the Government you were contemplating this purchase.

The WITNESS (to Major Bell): It was about a week in advance?

Major BELL: It would be immediately after the Board meeting when you brought up the general question before the Board. I believe it was a week or 10 days after that. It was some time after it was discussed by the Board that you discussed it with the Prime Minister.

The WITNESS: Yes, I mentioned it to the Prime Minister.

*By Sir Henry Drayton:*

Q. Oh, it was the Prime Minister who knew about it. After talking with Major Bell, can you give me the date any better?—A. Approximately a week in advance of the signing of that contract.

Q. Major Bell said something about a Board. I don't understand what that is; whether he can reinforce your memory there or not?—A. The conversation with the Prime Minister was entirely informal. I discussed the matter with him and mentioned the matter to him, as I probably mentioned many things.

Q. What did he say?—A. I explained to him what we proposed to do, and he said he saw no objection.

Q. You told him you were going to buy a property for 28,000,000 francs—A. I told him what we intended to do, in a general way; I do not think I gave him any details, because the details at that time, as I remember, were not perfected. It was a sort of informal information with respect to the general matter of policy.

[Sir Henry Thornton.]