

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, March 5, 1965

The house met at 11 a.m.

POST OFFICE DEPARTMENT

TABLING OF REPORT OF REVIEW BOARD ON HATE LITERATURE DISTRIBUTION

Hon. J. R. Nicholson (Minister of Citizenship and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, it gives me great satisfaction to table today in the house the report of the board of review set up on October 28, 1964 to inquire into the actions taken by me as postmaster general in issuing an interim prohibitory order against the national states' rights party to prevent the delivery in Canada of all mail directed to it in Canada, and the delivery in Canada of all mail coming into Canada for redistribution.

I should like to point out that I am tabling this report rather than my colleague the Postmaster General (Mr. Tremblay), and this is being done with his consent, because the interim prohibitory order was issued by me, because subsequently a board of review was set up on my instructions; I advised the house that it had been done, and the original report in the English language was presented to me before I changed portfolios. Let me say further that while the report was presented to me before I changed portfolios, the present Postmaster General has read the report and has informed me that he shares my views regarding it.

As hon. members will see from the report, copies of which will be made available today or tomorrow to all members of the house, the board of review supports in most definite terms my actions as postmaster general in proceeding to restrict in Canada the activities of the national states' rights party. The board states its flat opinion that the interim prohibitory order should be made permanent, and I quote a line from the bottom of page 56 and the top of page 57 of the report:

In our opinion your order was a public necessity.

Having considered the report before relinquishing the post office portfolio I ordered that the interim prohibitory order be made permanent. My colleague the Postmaster General assures me that steps have been taken toward that end.

In tabling the report I would like on behalf of my colleague the Postmaster General, on behalf of the government, and I am sure on behalf of every member of this house to thank the distinguished chairman, Mr. Justice Dalton C. Wells and the other two members of the board, Mr. Rodrigue Bedard, Q.C., and Mr. C. Douglas McIntyre, Q.C., for the thorough and painstaking manner in which they did the job.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, it is not often that I offer words of congratulation to a minister, as I am about to do, for the stand the minister took in this matter, the very reasonable attitude he adopted and the very necessary measure that he took in setting up a board of review.

This is a very difficult problem. The question of censorship is something that shocks the conscience of all who love freedom. Censorship in time of war is necessary. However, censorship in other times is a very difficult problem as the line between liberty and licence is sometimes very thin. I think what has been done here in setting up a board headed by so distinguished a jurist as Mr. Justice Dalton Wells will be a real assurance to all Canadians who want to see freedom preserved while at the same time protecting against action that is criminal in its intent, and which would separate our people.

PROCEDURE

MOTION FOR CONCURRENCE IN FIFTEENTH REPORT OF SPECIAL COMMITTEE

On the order:

Resuming the adjourned debate on motion of Mr. Olson, seconded by Mr. Walker,—That the fifteenth report of the special committee on procedure and organization, presented to the house on December 14, 1964, be now concurred in.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I would again ask that this motion be allowed to stand, with unanimous consent.

Mr. Speaker: Does the house give unanimous consent?

Mr. Harold E. Winch (Vancouver East): I know this is an important matter. Is it the