

Interim Supply

become head of a diplomatic mission, was his work recognized by his transfer to New Zealand as Canadian High Commissioner. And after serving in New Zealand very well indeed, when a very important position became vacant in Cairo in 1956, Mr. Norman was then transferred to Cairo as Ambassador.

I hope, Mr. Chairman, that that disposes of the suggestion that we yielded to some kind of pressure in New York and removed the permanent Canadian representative from the United Nations to far off New Zealand.

I would like now to make a short statement concerning a matter on which questions were asked in the house a few days ago. On March 15 I made a statement in the house which included the following paragraph:

This record—

That is, the record of the sub-committee of the United States Senate on security.

This record contains a great many innuendos and insinuations that Mr. Norman was a communist. We knew all about those charges which were made years ago in Washington, as a result of which Mr. Norman was subjected, in his own interests and in the public interest and with his own approval and full co-operation, to a special and exhaustive security check, the results of which were announced in two press releases by our department on August 9 and August 24, 1951.

That is what I said in the house on March 15. This particular sub-committee has made a wide variety of allegations against Mr. Norman. It has always been a principle, and I think, a correct principle, of our security investigation that we would not deal publicly in connection with a security inquiry with the details of any allegations made, for the reason that the details of a man's private life should not be the subject of accusation and rebuttal in public. The reasons behind this principle are I think obvious; it might well do far more harm than good, to the man in question, and it might cause results which would be unfortunate to all concerned without being of any assistance whatever to security.

In this unhappy, indeed in this tragic case which has attracted such tremendous attention and which has created so much controversy, and from which so many deductions have been drawn and implications made, I think I should, however—and I do it with regret—depart as a very rare exception from this practice, simply to say that Mr. Norman as a university student many years ago was known to have associated quite openly in university circles with persons who were thought to be communists or who appeared to behave like communists. He made no secret of those university associations.

These early associations of Mr. Norman were of course known to us when allegations were made and his record at that time was thoroughly re-checked in the light of all the information available, including of course information from confidential sources. It would be quite wrong for me to disclose the confidential information which we obtained, and that is a principle which I ask the house to respect. However I may say that I examined all this information in great detail more than once, because as his minister I had a particular responsibility in that regard, a responsibility which I accepted.

As a result of this study, the conclusion was reached that Mr. Norman was a loyal Canadian in whom we could trust, and the decision was made to retain him in a position of trust. All I can add is to reiterate that every one of the allegations made against him was examined in detail, and to say that the conclusion was reached on all the facts that there was no doubt in our minds about Mr. Norman's integrity and loyalty. His loyal and devoted and most valuable service over the years in positions of increasing importance has never given us any cause to regret that decision.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, before I refer to the minister's remarks I would like to ask him whether the statements made before the subcommittee of the United States senate on March 13 and 21 were untrue and unjustified and have no basis in fact. Did I understand the minister to say that that is a fact? That is the question I asked this morning on the basis of certain press dispatches published in the last 24 hours. I would ask the minister whether that is so.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Chairman, I have made my statement. I have told the committee what we knew about Mr. Norman, and I think I will stand on that statement. I am not going to say at this moment whether any single statement made in a United States subcommittee is accurate or not. I have not got the statements before me. I have said that Mr. Norman, to our knowledge, had certain communist associations as a student many years ago, and that we were not going to allow that to drive him out of the public service of Canada in face of the long years of loyal devotion he has given to the country.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, the answer is an equivocal one, because I asked these questions this morning and the minister has the evidence which was given before the subcommittee on those two days.

While he equivocates by saying that he does not have the statements before him at the moment, he has them in his office and he