

Mr. GERMAN. I will come to that in a moment. The only evidence as to the quantity of paint that was prepared and taken to Mr. Lanctot's house is the evidence of Mr. Pagé, and he is the only man who knows. There are men who did carry paint there, but they do not know, and do not say in what quantities they took it, but Mr. Pagé says he prepared all the paint that was taken from the government yards to Mr. Lanctot's house; he kept a correct account of all the paint, and he says that more paint was prepared and charged against Mr. Lanctot than was actually used as all the paint he had prepared for Lanctot's house had not been used in painting it, and some of it was still on hand when the work was completed, and as it was not the kind of paint that could be used in the government works it was not used, but Mr. Lanctot paid for it, and it was returned to the government stores. Now there is the question as to the independence of parliament.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). Before the hon. gentleman leaves the evidence—what business had this man, an employee of the government, to take away property belonging to the government and deposit it on Mr. Lanctot's premises? Was there any explanation of that? How did he come to do it? What justification is there for it, or what orders had he to do it? It strikes me as most peculiar.

Mr. GERMAN. He had no orders excepting the orders he took from himself and to himself. He was asked by Mr. Lanctot if, being unable to get all the paint that was required from the Labelle Company, he might supply some paint and keep a record of it, and later he would return it. It will be remembered that Mr. Pagé suggested to Mr. Lanctot when he spoke to him about the paint and told him to get it from Labelle and Company, Mr. Pagé said: They may not have all the kinds of paint you want, and I will let you have some from the government, and Mr. Lanctot said: Keep a record of that paint, and I will return it, and Mr. Lanctot did return it. Whether or not Mr. Pagé should have done that is another matter, but Mr. Lanctot was acting in perfect good faith and every thing he did was perfectly justified by the circumstances as they arose.

Mr. BORDEN (Halifax). I suppose Pagé has been dismissed?

Mr. GERMAN. I do not think so. He did not say he had when he was before the committee, and I do not suppose he would be for he impressed me as being a good employee of the government. And whether or not that has been the custom in the yards of lending men to do work on private houses or lending paint for work on pri-

Mr. PORTER.

vate houses I do not know. There is no evidence as to that, but at any rate Mr. Pagé appeared to feel that he was quite justified in what he did in lending the paint so long as he kept a correct account of it, and saw it was returned to the government stores. There is some question of Mr. Lanctot having violated the independence of parliament—

Mr. HAGGART (Winnipeg). Before you leave the report, will you kindly give us some reasons for handing out this severe censure to Mr. Blondin?

Mr. GERMAN. Before I finish I will give my hon. friend from Winnipeg my view with regard to that matter. There has been a suggestion that Mr. Lanctot has violated the independence of parliament.

There is an Act of parliament which declares that certain things done by a member of parliament shall be a violation of that Act, and by reason of which he shall not be entitled to occupy his seat in this House; but that is a statutory enactment, and a man cannot be guilty of a breach of the independence of parliament unless he is guilty of a breach of the Independence of Parliament Act. The gentlemen who prepared what is known as the minority report probably feel that they cannot possibly succeed in establishing the charges made against Mr. Lanctot, and, trying to read between the lines, and perhaps to create some feeling of suspicion, they would like to accuse him of something. But I cannot see how Mr. Lanctot or any one else can be accused of a violation of the independence of parliament unless he has violated some Act of parliament. Now, the hon. member for Winnipeg (Mr. Haggart) has asked what justification there is for the last paragraph of this report. That paragraph reads as follows:

Your committee feel that in view of the very serious nature of the charges made they should express an opinion on the propriety of Mr. Blondin making the charges in the manner he did. Your committee do not wish to state that Mr. Blondin did not believe there was truth in the allegations, or that he did not act from a bona fide belief in their truthfulness, but the committee think that before making so serious a charge against an honourable member of the House of Commons, he should have made some independent inquiry to verify the truthfulness of the charges made, and which he apparently did not do. The Minister of Marine was called as a witness. His evidence as to this on page 189, where he says he had information that no fraud had been committed and that all labour supplied by the shipyards had been paid for and all material supplied had been returned, and which information he would have been pleased to give Mr. Blondin had he applied for same.

Your committee think that if Mr. Blondin had made these inquiries he would not and should not have made these charges.