

Inquiries of the Ministry

the original document and the copy that he compared so that this matter can be cleared up?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, this seems to me to be a very unreasonable request because otherwise it would be quite possible for anyone to put a document in the papers and say, "This is a government document," and then ask for the production of the one it purported to represent.

FOREIGN INVESTMENT—RESCINDING OR MODIFICATION
OF DECISION RESPECTING CREATION OF SCREENING
MECHANISM

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Acting Prime Minister. In view of the fact the minister said on Monday that no decision had been taken on the basis of the published version of the Gray Report, and that yesterday a document indicated agreement had been reached in principle in the cabinet, and that the minister was quoted as saying outside the House that this was a question of a cabinet decision being conveyed illegally to the press, can the minister clear up this question of when a decision is not a decision, and may I ask the Acting Prime Minister—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Perhaps the hon. member might like to rephrase the question. It seems to me that the hon. member is asking the Acting Prime Minister to indicate when a decision is not a decision, and at this point I think we get involved in semantics. The question might be rephrased.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, I was leading up to ask the Acting Prime Minister if any action has been taken by the cabinet to rescind or modify the decision which was taken on July 29 to agree in principle to the setting up of a screening mechanism to deal with foreign takeovers?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, all I can say without breaking my oath of secrecy is that the whole subject of foreign ownership has been under discussion many times since July 29. I am hopeful that we will not have to have many more meetings before we reach final decisions.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the Acting Prime Minister whether he is making the categorical assertion that the statement which appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* yesterday, to the effect that the government had agreed in principle to the setting up of a screening mechanism, is inaccurate and no such decision was reached by the cabinet?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, there have been many of these kinds of "decisions" reached by the cabinet on many subjects over a long period of time. I say to the hon. member, as a former first minister of a government, that he knows the only time a decision is made is when some authority is given to make a statement expressing government policy.

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP—DETERMINATION OF SOURCE OF
LEAK OF CABINET DOCUMENT—POSSIBILITY OF
PROSECUTION

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, with so many being in fear of the revelation that they

[Mr. Woolliams.]

might have participated in this leak and in order to clarify the situation, would the Acting Prime Minister say whether the RCMP have made any reports on their investigation or whether Goyer's refined Gestapo—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would think the right hon. gentleman would know that ministers and members ought to be referred to either by their responsibilities as members of the government or by reference to their constituencies.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, there was no identification of any member. There was simply a description of a new secret organization that has been built up.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, will the Acting Prime Minister say, in order to relieve the fears of some members of the Press Gallery and even of some of the ministers opposite, whether or not there has been any determination made as to the source of the leak and, in particular, what the government has in mind as to prosecution against those who revealed what was already known?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I am sure the right hon. gentleman would agree that before we make policy we should have the facts. We do not have the facts; we have not yet completed our inquiries, and may I add that the police have not yet been called in.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, in view of the deep sense of concern the minister expressed yesterday and the fact that for two or three days nothing has been found out by the minister himself, does he not think it is about time to start to investigate this serious matter which he spoke of in such dulcet tones?

Mr. Sharp: Mr. Speaker, I agree entirely with the right hon. gentleman except for the remark about dulcet tones.

Mr. Speaker: Order please. There are three or four hon. members who wish to ask supplementaries, the hon. member for Yukon, the hon. member for Cumberland-Colchester North and others. I think we should complete our first round of questioning and then I will return to them. The hon. member for York South.

Mr. Nielsen: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege involving the answers given by the Acting Prime Minister both today and yesterday. If Your Honour will refer to page 9594 of yesterday's *Hansard*, in reply to the second question of the Leader of the Opposition the Acting Prime Minister, referring to the investigation, informed the House that "an investigation was launched immediately the report was heard on the radio this morning." That was Tuesday morning. But after the oral question period yesterday the Acting Prime Minister appeared in the Commonwealth Room at a press conference and informed the media that the Prime Minister's office had already started some investigations on the Saturday as soon as the matter was revealed in the press. One or the other of these two statements is accurate and one or the other is false. Either the investigations were started on