

Inquiries of the Ministry

last two days of statements made that have no foundation, and this is one of them.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, the right hon. gentleman is getting very irritable. I have had an opportunity to look at the files. This has been done, and I have said there are no written communications in the files. Is the right hon. gentleman in a position to deny that?

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yes.

Mr. Gregoire: Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I am sure the hon. member for Lapointe must realize that his basic question has been answered to the best of the ability of those concerned.

Mr. Gregoire: No, Mr. Speaker, I do not think I have had an answer to my last question. My question was, are any steps being taken so that a translation will be made? Is something actually being done by this government?

Mr. Pearson: Yes, Mr. Speaker, steps are being taken. The first step we are taking is to try to find out what the previous government did, because in the last session of parliament they intimated that something was being done.

Mr. Gregoire: Yes, but that is not a step taken with regard to the actual translation of the manual.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I rise on a question of privilege. I am now informed that a letter written to the Carswell Company referring to Beauchesne was dated October 25, 1962; that enclosed in that letter was a copy of *Hansard* of October 19, 1962, as referred to at page 705. What I shall do is write to Carswell and secure that letter from them. If the Prime Minister says it is not in the files then I do not know where it has been misplaced, but I will secure the original from the company.

Mr. Pearson: This is the letter which the publisher referred to in his letter to me, which I have now received.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Pearson: I did not know this question was coming up this morning, but the letter of July 30 has just now been sent down to my desk, and the letter referred to by the publisher from the then prime minister was of November last, as the right hon. gentleman states.

When I got this letter from the publisher I made inquiries and I was informed there was no correspondence on file in the prime

[Mr. Diefenbaker.]

minister's office or the privy council office dealing with this matter, even though we knew the letter was received in November. It is possible that the right hon. gentleman may have taken this letter away with him when he removed his files from the prime minister's office when he left office.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I would be delighted if the right hon. gentleman would table that letter, because apparently he was aware of the fact that I had written it.

Mr. Pearson: Yes, but I am also aware of the fact that the letter is not in the files, and the right hon. gentleman, when he left office, removed a lot of the files from the Prime Minister's office.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I followed the course of removing those that were personal, and that is a course which has always been followed; but the right hon. gentleman now has a smokescreen. He had the letter he knew I had written, and did not want the house to know.

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I would ask the right hon. gentleman if he would examine the files he removed in order to get this letter and return it to me so I can put it on the record.

Mr. Diefenbaker: The right hon. gentleman misled the house.

Mr. Marcel Lessard (Lake St. John): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Prime Minister regarding the removal of files by the former prime minister when he left office. Does the Prime Minister think that the former prime minister took with him his commitment in regard to Canada acquiring nuclear arms?

Mr. Pearson: No, Mr. Speaker, I have no thought of that kind. It is of course quite customary for outgoing prime ministers and cabinet ministers to take personal files away with them. I have asked the former prime minister whether he will examine the files that he removed from the Prime Minister's office—and a great many were removed—to see whether this particular letter was not inadvertently removed also, the letter which was referred to in the letter I received from the publisher only yesterday.

Mr. Diefenbaker: But the answer was given in the house today, and it was untrue.

Mr. Speaker: Order. This is Friday, a fish day, and the sooner we complete the question period the sooner we can go fishing.