

far as anybody connected with the Department was concerned, absolutely not a word. I speak for the Department, and I am quite satisfied I can speak in the same way for the Minister, because he told me that up to that time the receipt of those cablegrams, the matter of the transfer of this boat to the Russian Government, had never been mooted.

Mr. CARVELL: We accept that, but do not tell us anything more.

*By Mr. Bennett (Simcoe):*

Q. Tell us the date of the first cable?—A. 25th February, 1916.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. It shows on its face that it is the first communication. It says: "It is the wish of the Russian Government to acquire an ice breaker of the Canadian type"?—A. That cablegram was answered on the 26th.

Hon. Mr. REID: It is in the evidence.

*By the Chairman:*

Q. It says: "My advisers will agree to transfer of this vessel to Russian Government." What happened after that?—A. In due time both of these communications reached the Department, it would be some days subsequently, the exact date upon which they reached the Department I am not prepared to say.

*By Mr. McKenzie:*

Q. Before we pass from what the Chairman has read, would not the Minister of Marine be a party to the agreement making the transfer? The Government agreed to it?—A. Yes.

Q. And he was a member of the Government?—A. Yes.

Q. He would likely know at the time that the transfer was made?—A. Yes, he did; he knew at that time.

Q. It was made before you saw these cables?—A. Yes.

Hon. Mr. REID: The agreement.

*By Mr. Carvell:*

Q. You mean the principle, not the details?—A. I have a very good idea of what took place. I can only state that as my idea, if it would be acceptable. I have no hesitation in giving my view as to what happened.

Q. I have no objection, Mr. Johnston.

*By Mr. Boys:*

Q. Did you communicate your views at any time to Mr. Fraser?—A. When the issue was raised by the Auditor General, I do not know whether at his suggestion or at my suggestion, he came to my office, and I showed him the entire correspondence, and I told him: That is our story so far as we are concerned.

Q. Do you know when that was?—A. Well, I could not speak with any accuracy as to dates, because I made no mental note of it or official record of it. I think what happened was, that this despatch through the Governor General's office came to Council while Council was sitting, and, as a matter of fact, Council considered the matter and the reply was sent from Council.

*By Mr. Carvell:*

Q. There is a hiatus of five or six months between that time and the correspondence?—A. Yes.