

Questions

are not in the position of a court trying an individual and having to have direct evidence, but we would rather have the benefit of the doubt go the other way. If there is any doubt about the likelihood of there being disloyalty, we just cannot take any risks; but we do not feel that we are making any kind of conviction that would justify branding an individual in such a way as to cause him harm in the community generally. Whenever there are questions, we have to consider whether or not it is in the public interest that there be this possibility of identification that will cause unnecessary prejudice to an individual who has not had any trial, against whom no charge has been brought, but about whom we feel it would be undesirable to take risks.

I mentioned the possibility of there being, well, involuntary indiscretions. We know of cases where that has happened. In an evening party something occurs that unloosens one's tongue, and it wags more freely than it should in view of the information one has acquired because of his official position. We do not want to make that a scandal, but we do feel that it requires being careful and cautious, and I assure hon. members that we do try not to be unfair; but we also do try not to raise any hysterical anxiety over the personnel of the public service, because my experience has been that on the whole Canada is entitled to be proud of both the loyalty and the devotion of most of its public servants.

[Later:]

Mr. Fulton: Having regard to the answer the Prime Minister gave me earlier this day, and particularly the answer to part 8, might I ask if the Prime Minister is aware of the fact that on two occasions in the United Kingdom details as to the number of government employees released for security reasons have been given, and also that the names of an advisory board which hears security cases have been made public? In the light of that information, will the Prime Minister reconsider the matter of whether or not similar information could be produced in Canada?

Mr. St. Laurent: Well, Mr. Speaker, of course this government has no responsibility for what is done in the United Kingdom. Naturally, this government is always impressed by what is done in other countries, and it does consider whether what is done elsewhere would be appropriate to Canadian conditions. I know the hon. member is just as much concerned about this subject as we can be on this side of the house, and is concerned that the measures be effective

[Mr. St. Laurent.]

without being unfair. I expect there will be a discussion about it when we come to the estimates of the Department of Justice.

If at that time the hon. member still feels that we are not going far enough, and will give his reasons, I can assure him they will be carefully considered, because it is not a matter between one party and another party. It is a matter in which all responsible Canadian citizens want to be fair, but they want the government to be prudent.

Mr. Fleming: May I ask the Prime Minister a question on that point? What provisions, if any, exist for appeal on the part of a public servant affected by such decisions?

Mr. St. Laurent: There has been no formal mode of procedure set up, but I believe the gravity of making a removal or an exchange is always one of the considerations that the minister responsible for it has in mind. There are some cases where a thing like that can be done, you know, and it involves no possible unfairness. A suggestion may be made that an ordinary messenger become a confidential messenger. Whether or not he shall be made a confidential messenger has not been brought to his attention, so that is not dealt with nearly as seriously as where an officer in an important grade in the service is found to be someone who should be transferred to some other department.

We gave consideration to the possibility of appeal, and we even inquired from the officials in the United Kingdom how it worked there. We have not yet been able to convince ourselves that there would be any greater assurance of fairness to an individual by going beyond the rather informal character of the proceedings that are now taken in that regard. We have not found any system that could be considered as an appeal that would work.

QUESTIONS PASSED AS ORDERS FOR RETURNS

CAPE BRETON PARK—BRIDGES

Mr. Nowlan:

In each of the calendar years since the Cape Breton park was instituted, how much money has been spent by the government of Canada for or in connection with each of the bridges in or adjacent to the said park?

Mr. Lesage: Return now tabled.

RURAL MAIL ROUTES—DISCONTINUANCE IN PRAIRIE PROVINCES

Mr. Pommer:

1. Have any rural mail routes been discontinued in 1953, in (a) Manitoba; (b) Saskatchewan; (c) Alberta?

2. If so, in what locations?