

Inquiries of the Ministry

ence to the task of examining the Yukon as well as the Northwest Territories.

Generally, Mr. Speaker, we welcome the announcement that has been made today and we wish the commission success. As I said once before, I hope there will be some action and not merely lip service as we have so often seen in the past.

SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES**INVOLVEMENT OF CANADIANS IN RUSSIAN ESPIONAGE ACTS**

On the orders of the day:

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, with further reference to the matter dealt with by the Prime Minister I should like to get clarification on one point. Was there co-operation given to the police by both these civil servants? Did they assist the police in the most effective way possible after they were spoken to by the police officers?

Right Hon. L. B. Pearson (Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, only one of the two men I mentioned in my statement is a civil servant. In his case co-operation was not given until he was confronted by the police last week with the fact that they knew of his activities, and had known of his activities over many months. All I can say is that in the interests of security it was considered desirable for them to follow those activities without his knowledge, and my hon. friend will know what I mean by that. In the case of the other man mentioned in the communiqué, he went to the police immediately when he was approached for the first time, and worked with them from that time.

Mr. Diefenbaker: In the case of this number one man, the one who co-operated, did the police go to him or did he go to the police? Second, what did the Prime Minister mean yesterday when he said, as found at the bottom of page 1,088 of *Hansard*:

So far as the two persons who have been expelled are concerned, members of the Soviet embassy staff, they are exempt from criminal prosecution in this country by their status.

That I understand.

So far as the others are concerned, they have co-operated with the police in an effective way in bringing this matter to a head, and no action is at this time being taken against them.

Whom did the Prime Minister mean by "the others"? He says that one co-operated. Were there some others who co-operated as well?

Mr. Pearson: Yes, Mr. Speaker. In my statement I mentioned the fact that a number of Canadians worked with the police in this security investigation. As to the two men mentioned in the communiqué, one co-operated from the very beginning and the other did not until he was approached. I realize that the language I used, without having the opportunity to know about the question in advance, lends itself to misinterpretation and misunderstanding. As the right hon. gentleman pointed out, it might have been taken to mean that the two mentioned in the communiqué co-operated from the beginning. I regret that looseness of language, but perhaps it is understandable in the circumstances. In any event the co-operation in the second case did not begin until the beginning of last week.

Mr. Diefenbaker: One other question. Would the Prime Minister say when this matter was first brought to his attention?

Mr. Pearson: Mr. Speaker, I am in some difficulty in mentioning dates and circumstances in a security matter of this kind, but the matter was brought to my attention when our security people felt the time had come to expose it.

Hon. Paul Martineau (Pontiac-Témiscamingue): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Will the Prime Minister say who will have the final authority to determine whether proceedings are to be taken against the so-called other Canadian; whether it will be the R.C.M.P., the Minister of Justice or one of his officials, or the Government as a whole?

Mr. Pearson: In this situation it will be the responsibility of the Government on the advice of the Minister of Justice.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Burnaby-Coquitlam): A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. May I ask the Prime Minister to clarify the point he has just made. Today he has mentioned two persons, one of whom was a civil servant and the other a naturalized Canadian. With reference to his statement of yesterday, and particularly the words "so far as the others are concerned", I take it now that there were more than two persons, since there were more than two persons who co-operated with the R.C.M.P. and one person who did not co-operate with the R.C.M.P. Am I correct?

Mr. Pearson: There were two persons who were involved in this matter in the sense that they were in touch with security agents of the Soviet Embassy and operating with them,