

Inquiries of the Ministry

the hon. gentleman can deny that the alleged cabinet memorandum reproduced in the *Gazette* has been in the hands of—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member knows that he cannot ask a question in those terms. The hon. member for Calgary Centre.

Mr. Baldwin: A point of order, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Peace River on a point of order.

Mr. Baldwin: If Your Honour takes objection to my question I will rephrase it.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Peace River.

Mr. Baldwin: Has this cabinet document been in the hands of the owners of the *Citizen* for six weeks?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Since the hon. gentleman wishes to enlighten me, may I say that I did not know about this leak until this morning.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please, the Chair recognized the hon. member for Calgary Centre a moment ago.

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP—CIRCULATION OF CABINET DOCUMENT TO MINISTERS

Hon. D. S. Harkness (Calgary Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister in connection with this document that he has now admitted exists. It does not involve any breaking of the oath of cabinet secrecy; it is really an administrative matter. Was this document circulated to all members of cabinet, or was it circulated only to a certain number and, if so, to whom? Or was it not circulated to members of the cabinet at all?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member has been a member of cabinets and he knows that records of cabinet proceedings are distributed to all ministers. There is nothing unusual about that.

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP—REQUEST THAT PRIVY COUNCILLORS BE PERMITTED TO SEE RECORD OF JULY 29 CABINET MEETING

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Prince Albert): Mr. Speaker, I have a very simple question for the minister since, whether he believes it or not his credibility is now in issue as a result of the statements he has made, which have been so—

Some hon. Members: Order!

Mr. Diefenbaker: —that have clashed one with the other; I will put it that way. In order to clear up the matter, would the minister allow members of Her Majesty's Privy Council to see the record of the cabinet meeting on July 29? This would give the minister an opportunity to prove whether the disjointed stories he has been telling are well based.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

[Mr. Baldwin.]

Mr. Diefenbaker: Will the minister permit that?

Some hon. Members: Answer!

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, in the answers I gave yesterday—and I have had an opportunity of reviewing the record very carefully—I did not in any way, I think, mislead the House. I said in answer to the specific question asked by the Leader of the Opposition that I could not discuss what was before cabinet. I said on a number of occasions, both within and without the House, that decisions regarding government policy on foreign ownership had not yet been reached. The matter is still before cabinet. We have not yet made our decisions. The document that has been released suggests there was some tentative decision in principle. This may or may not be true. I cannot either deny it or accept it, but the decisions of the government as to its policy on foreign ownership have still to be made.

• (3:40 p.m.)

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Speaker, does the hon. gentleman not know that when there is a challenge in the mother of parliaments such as has taken place here the government invariably allows members of the Privy Council, bound by their oaths not to reveal what they find—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am not sure whether that was a preamble or the question, but perhaps the right hon. gentleman might ask his supplementary question now.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I try so hard, Mr. Speaker, but those people across the way are a little frightened.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Diefenbaker: The Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister almost convinced me in the past that he is a wit, but I am beginning to think I was only half right.

An hon. Member: That's twice in one week, Bernie.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP—REQUEST FOR TABLING OF CABINET DOCUMENT OF JULY 29

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a supplementary question to the Acting Prime Minister? In order to clear up this matter, will he seek from his cabinet colleagues the authority to table the cabinet document of July 29 in the House tomorrow?

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Acting Prime Minister): As I said yesterday, Mr. Speaker, I think it is very desirable that the government should take a decision on this matter of foreign ownership. The matter is before cabinet at the present time and we are hopeful we can make a decision very shortly. I think this would be the best way of clearing up any confusion that may exist.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, pending the decision on the whole broad question, will the