

MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

ROOM 429, HOUSE OF COMMONS,

WEDNESDAY, February 10, 1926.

The Special Committee appointed to investigate the administration of the Department of Customs and Excise, and charges relating thereto, met at 10.30 a.m., the Chairman, Mr. P. Mercier, presiding.

COMMISSIONER CORTLANDT STARNES: called and sworn.

By Hon. Mr. Bennett:

Q. Mr. Starnes, you are the Commissioner of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police?—A. Yes, sir.

Q. And have been for how long?—A. Since April, 1923.

Q. Who is your chief departmental officer?—A. The Minister of Justice.

Q. To whom you report?—A. In matters of administration.

Q. Have you had occasion to direct members of your force to make investigations and reports with respect to the conduct of the Department of Customs and Excise?—A. Not with respect to the conduct of the department. We have assisted; we have made investigations and inquiries in assistance of the Customs Department.

Q. Did you make these investigations in consequence of written instructions?—A. Sometimes written requests from the Department of Customs, and sometimes verbal requests.

Q. Will you produce the written requests from the Department of Customs?—A. In any particular case?

Q. In all the cases from the Customs Department beginning, we will say, at the first of this year. We will take that first.—A. This year. There have been no written requests that I know of during this year.

Q. What about 1925?—A. In 1925 we did a lot of investigation work for the Department of Customs and Excise throughout the country from Halifax to Victoria, sometimes at their verbal request, and sometimes on our own initiative, where we reported, but we took no prosecutions without instructions from the Department of Customs and Excise.

Q. The Mounted Police have headquarters or inspectors at how many points in Canada?—A. They have ten divisional points and a number of detachments.

Q. You have detachments that report to the various inspectors at these ten points?—A. There is a superintendent in command of each district.

Q. Where are the written instructions which you received from the Department of Customs and Excise with respect to investigations in 1925?—A. They would be on each particular file of the case in question.

Q. And you have a record of them?—A. Yes.

Q. Produce it?—A. The files that I have taken here are the particular files that were mentioned in connection with Mr. Stevens.

Q. I am asking you, for the moment, for all cases in which you had instructions in writing from the Department of Customs and Excise in 1925. Will you produce the record?—A. I could produce them, but it would take some little time.

[Commissioner Cortlandt Starnes.]