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Note du secrétaire d'État aux Affaires extérieures pour le premier ministre

Memorandum from Secretary of State for External Affairs to Prime Minister

[Ottawa],

April 15, 1957

If, at your press conference this evening, you are asked about the tragic case of Herbert Norman, perhaps you may wish merely to say that if a further statement is to be made it will come from me, but if you feel you should say something yourself, I would like to put forward the following suggestions.

Our purpose in this matter has been to protect one of our officials from slanderous implications against his loyalty as a Canadian, and also to do what we could, in the face of very great difficulties, to prevent public disclosures by a legislative committee of another government concerning Canadians. Even if the so-called evidence is fair and valid in any case, and it was not in this case, it is only elementary decency to send it to the Canadian Government for investigation and for any action which should be taken.

We have been accused of not clearing this matter up in 1951. At that time, we affirmed and re-affirmed our confidence in Mr. Norman as a loyal official of the Government and as a patriotic Canadian, and for years afterward, no reference was made to the matter in the United States. I do not agree that we should have made all the evidence available at that time. This is absolutely contrary to our way of dealing with security cases, a way which has been effective in protecting national interests and is just to individuals. In this case, disclosure would have focussed a great deal more attention on the incident than was actually given, and in the atmosphere of 1951, this would have been unjust and unfair to Mr. Norman, and might